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THE NEW

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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

THE question which will be decided when the Council of the League meets next week is whether sovereign States are capable of uniting in common action to prevent war. The League's opportunity is unusually favourable. The excuse used in the Manchurian dispute that the League Powers were helpless in the Pacific does not apply in the Mediterranean. France, whose whole foreign policy is based on the League, dare not let it split into its component fragments; she can incidentally force this country into a far more genuine co-operation with the League in Europe as a price for her co-operation against Mussolini. British opinion, in spite of the isolationist press, is overwhelmingly in favour of League action. The Peace Ballot commits a very large section of the British public; the Labour and Liberal parties are anxious for full co-operation with the League, and the Imperialists are at length realising that the League is not some foreign idealistic notion, but the one practical means of Imperial defence. Most important of all are signs that decent people of all sorts and often of no party are outraged at the idea that we should totally disregard our obligations to an almost unarmed people, and we believe that the letter signed by Col. L'Estrange Malone, Mr. G. T. Garratt and Mr. J. H. Driberg in our correspondence columns this week is symptomatic of a very general feeling. In this country Abyssinia will, we believe, find many practical friends whose sympathy is not the interested sympathy of Imperialism.

France's Choice

M. Laval is in a much less enviable position than the British Government. He can, of course, find many loopholes for delay and evasion, as an article on League procedure which we publish this week makes plain. He can wrangle with Great Britain if he wishes, and emphasise our disloyalty to the League in the matter of the German navy. He will in any case insist on another last minute effort to conciliate the Duce, and it is not impossible that Mussolini, aware at last that Great Britain is seriously roused, may accept a compromise if he can call it victory. If conciliation and the substance of victory do not suffice Italy M. Laval will still strive to avoid the vote which would denounce the Duce as an aggressor and automatically bring sanctions into play. But if Article XI is invoked M. Laval can scarcely burke the report of the Committee of Thirteen set up after Stresa to consider not sanctions but methods of economic pressure which can be used by the League as preventive measures. It was a French memorandum that insisted that these measures might be effective if the League Powers boycotted key war materials, upon which, incidentally, Italy is particularly dependent. In the last resort if the British Government's lead is clear the French will follow. M. Laval will be subjected

to pressure from many sides—from his Continental allies, from Great Britain, from his own very powerful Left. International Labour is not negligible in this matter, and Mr. Attlee's conversations with M. Blum are significant. M. Laval will be affected, as Great Britain is, by the united opinion of the coloured world—an important factor for France with a large coloured Empire, and he will be affected most of all by the knowledge that if Mussolini gets away with this, Hitler watching cynically across the border will be the first to profit by the Duce's example.

Congress and President

The American Congress ended a most important session with a farcical scene staged by Senator Huey Long. The Senate has no means of self-protection, whatever the urgency of the business to be done before adjournment. Huey Long killed the money Bill upon which the financing of several first-class measures depended. These included the Social Security Act covering old-age pensions and unemployment insurance, the Guffey Act for regulating the coal industry, the new Labour Relations Board designed to establish collective bargaining, and other reforms. Much of the new legislation will be delayed as a result of the " filibuster," which arose out of a revolt of Southern Senators against the reduction of government loans to cotton-growers. But the Administration has other resources and the additions to the New Deal will undoubtedly go forward. The follies and the bitter conflicts in Congress have tended during the summer to obscure the fact that the session just ended has made an extraordinary record. The President has been hampered at every turn, and no one Bill has come out as he wanted it. But in addition to workers' insurance and old-age pensions, he has secured the passage of Bills reforming the Federal Reserve and banking procedure and the public utility holding companies, and making a new basis for taxation which ensuing Congresses will undoubtedly accept and extend. This is the third year of the presidential term. It usually marks the end of a President's influence over Congress. But Mr. Roosevelt has maintained his dominance as legislative leader far more than any recent President. He has displayed both generalship and power —all the more noteworthy because six months ago the Supreme Court judgment on the N.R.A. was taken to be a mortal blow.

America and the Soviet

The Soviet Government has replied promptly to the American protest against the propagandist activities of the Comintern, by a flat denial of any breach of the obligations into which it has entered, or of any responsibility for the Comintern's doings. A similar answer is understood to have been made to an informal British protest not long ago. But the American protest was a far more serious affair, with more than a hint that the next step might be a breach of diplomatic relations. The Soviet Government presumably continues to believe in the World Revolution, though it no longer expects it soon; and it proposes to postpone working for it to the achievement of a united front against Fascism with the democratic parties. The Comintern at its recent conference recorded its conversion to the same view; but even so its doctrines and policy can hardly be squared with the somewhat exigent anti-revolutionary professions which the United States is apt to require as a *sine qua non*. If the Soviet Government is to be held responsible for what the Comintern says, as well as for what it does, diplomatic relations are hardly possible between America and the U.S.S.R. But the path of wisdom is to ignore the Comintern's talk—which is no longer of more than theoretical importance. The realistic thing would be to congratulate the Soviet Government on a change of policy which makes international co-operation possible.

An Albertian Situation

It will be very interesting to see what happens in Alberta, where the Social Credit Party has just won a resounding electoral victory. It is true that Mr. Aberhart, who heads the Social Credit movement in Alberta, is not an orthodox Douglasite, and that Major Douglas himself, called in by the late United Farmers' Government, has reported that Mr. Aberhart's plan of guaranteeing every citizen an income of $25 a month is altogether impracticable. But Major Douglas has also said that he believes a sound social credit plan can be drafted for Alberta, despite the fact that in Canada the currency is under the control of the Dominion as a whole, and not of the separate Provinces. Moreover, Mr. Aberhart has met Major Douglas's criticism with the reply that he is not wedded to his own plan, and that he is perfectly prepared to call in Major Douglas to advise upon the drafting of a workable scheme. If this invitation is accepted, the advocates of Social Credit will get their first chance in the world of showing what they can do. They have appeared as candidates for the legislature in other places besides Canada—in Australia, for example—but never before have come near victory. Now they have won, in a province from which the United Farmers long ago ousted the orthodox Canadian parties; and though it is difficult to see how much can be done to put Major Douglas's ideas into effect in a single province, apparently Major Douglas as well as Mr. Aberhart is prepared to accept the challenge. The result, whatever it is, is bound to be interesting.

An Exciting Experiment

Mr. Aberhart, who has won his victory with a mixture of social credit propaganda and religious revivalism, has perhaps really more in common with Father Coughlin and Dr. Townsend than with Major Douglas. He has triumphantly won the votes of the electors in face of the universal denunciation of his scheme by professional economists, business men, and the representatives of all the other parties, from the Conservatives to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. His victory is undoubtedly due mainly to the simplicity of his appeal, which has gone right home to the debt-ridden agricultural communities before whom it has been preached. A political party which, in the name of God, promises every citizen comfort and security in place of debt and threatening bankruptcy is bound to make a powerful appeal, if once it can overcome the initial difficulty of getting itself taken seriously. Concentrated Social Credit propaganda for years past has accomplished this in Alberta; and now the apostles of the new evangel are to be put to the test of practice. In order to reassure bank depositors and other substantial citizens, Mr. Aberhart has already announced

that nothing will be done rashly; and apparently the intention is to await "Major Douglas's O.K.," as the Douglasites put it, before actually putting a Social Credit policy into effect. Meanwhile, Mr. Aberhart, who was not himself a candidate at the election, is to be found a seat; and the United Farmers are anxious to hand over power at once, in order that Mr. Aberhart, and not they, may have the task of facing the immediate problems raised by the victory of the Social Credit Party. In common with many other sceptics who for all their criticisms of Major Douglas's formula have urged the advantages of increasing the consumer's purchasing power, we shall await the outcome with sympathy and genuine expectancy.

Crime in 1933

The statistics of crime in England and Wales for 1933, which have just been published, bring out a few interesting points. Among males over 16 the proportion of offenders increased steadily from 1929 to 1932, and fell slightly in 1933, which seems to confirm the connection between crime--especially burglary and kindred offences—and unemployment. The number of suicides also rose each year from 1929 to 1932, and then fell a little in 1933, which suggests a similar connection. There has also been an increase in juvenile theft and house-breaking, chiefly into unoccupied premises, which is also clearly connected with the lack of prospect in decent jobs open to young people. Of all the persons found guilty of non-indictable offences more than half were guilty under the road traffic Acts. Cases of cruelty to children and offences against the Education Acts both declined—which is a pleasant item on the credit side. Of 99 known or suspected murderers, no less than 43 committed suicide. Nineteen persons were convicted of murder, and 11 of these were executed, the remaining sentences being commuted to penal servitude for life. If morals are to be drawn, the most evident seem to be, first, that better employment would considerably reduce both juvenile and adult crime, and secondly, that road transport is plainly marked out by the criminal statistics as well as by the figures of accidents for continual public attention during the next few years. Mr. Hore-Belisha has done his best: but the treatment—wider streets, planned development of building and roads constructed for the security of different types of traffic must be tackled sooner or later.

Summer in London

The cycle of fine summers since 1927 has been remarkable, as visitors from America and the Dominions who have been brought up to believe that it is always raining in England, have noticed with surprise. The English seaside resorts have recognised the facts and made the most of them; but how many more such seasons will be needed before London sets out to make itself into a summer capital? The Lansbury Lido, Shakespeare in Regent's Park, a few cafés in the public gardens, a half-dozen little efforts in the West End towards tables on the pavement—what a pathetic record for a great city which in many other respects has been transformed within twenty years. There is said to be a falling in the demand for lawn tennis courts; but if so, it is more than made up for by the popular insistence upon open-air swimming places. To restore the Thames as a playground is an obvious task, and the first big step, when the removal of Waterloo Bridge has revealed the full desolation of the Lambeth — Blackfriars stretch, will be to hasten the planning of the Surrey side. There is really no reason why London in hot weather should be the most uncomfortable town in Europe.

THE TREND OF BRITISH OPINION

THE belated discovery that the world is a unit and that you cannot let Mussolini have his little war in Abyssinia without endangering both the peace of Europe and the security of the British Empire, has had surprising results both on the British Government and the British press. The Government, though retaining, for diplomatic reasons, the blockade on arms to Abyssinia, has sent an unmistakable warning to Mussolini. The Atlantic fleet, supplied with eight months' rations, is by a happy coincidence due for a cruise in the Mediterranean, and reinforcements of troops have also, curiously enough, been found necessary at Malta. The *Times* has at length realised the issues at stake, and coupled in two significant leading articles an admission that the peace of the world may necessitate a division of the colonial spoils of Empire together with a serious discussion of the economic measures that might be taken to check Mussolini. "The League," says the *Times* in an unusually down-right passage, "has to show that it is not afraid of Mussolini." Meanwhile, the *Morning Post*, after raving about pacifists who thirst for blood (amongst whom the *Times* is now presumably included) suddenly saw "the whole issue in a new light" when it discovered that Italian newspapers were talking of rebuilding the Roman Empire on the route to India. (Mussolini has, of course, been thundering about this for twelve years, but the *Morning Post* has been too pro-Fascist to notice). The vision of Caesar striding the route to India like a Colossus so wrought upon the *Morning Post* that it warned its friend the Duce that if he did threaten Malta or Egypt, the whole British nation would stand behind the Government. Lord Rothermere's *Daily Mail* and *Evening News* have still to remember their old imperialism. These papers which clamoured with more indecent violence than any others for the worst features of Versailles, which declared that no loyal British subject would ever again trade with Germany, and which even protested against feeding Hun children when it was suggested that the blockade might be lifted in 1919—these papers now have the impudence to talk of the injustices of Versailles and urge us to make a place in the sun for the Powers which were deprived of colonies in the greedy scramble after the war. They are left today screaming abuse at all who seek for peace, openly displaying a curiously un-English predilection for bullying an unarmed nation whose integrity we have jointly guaranteed as solemnly as we ever did that of Belgium, and boosting to the skies the high imperial mission of the bullying Power.

If the Rothermere press is nauseating, the Beaverbrook press is comic. For months the *Daily Express* in the morning, and the *Evening Standard* by night, have been beseeching us to "keep out" of the League of Nations and leave

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Abyssinia to Italy. Day after day they have denounced the bellicose pacifists who want Great Britain to make war on Italy—though no one has yet, as far as we know, advocated anything but the joint sanctions of the League. Last week, it seems, someone—perhaps someone of importance—had a talk to Lord Beaverbrook. For the first time he learnt what the League of Nations was. He discovered that it had a legal procedure and that sanctions could only follow a unanimous condemnation of Italy as the aggressor. The result was startling. The *Evening Standard* and *Daily Express* suddenly fell over backwards. There was, after all, "no reason for the public to be alarmed." The war they had yelled themselves hoarse about would not come and never could have come, because sanctions could only be taken if there was unanimity at Geneva, and unanimity was impossible. In short, everything they had been dinning into the British public for months was just so much Ballyhouston. We could go home and sleep just as soundly as if Lord Beaverbrook had never imagined the war he had been warning us to avoid.

But there are signs now in the Beaverbrook press that in some circumstances their proprietor might not be averse to war. The Empire, after all, is Lord Beaverbrook's peculiar hobby, and what if the pacifists have been right and war in Africa does threaten the general peace, including the security of the British Empire? The same idea has occurred to Mr. Garvin, whose article in last Sunday's *Observer* has astonished and shocked innumerable people who respected him as a journalist of judgment and experience. From this strange concoction three points could be distinguished. The first was that Great Britain should, under no circumstances, honour its obligations at Geneva; the second, that if Mussolini or anyone else, threatened the British Empire, we must of course fight; and the third, that since the British air force was utterly inadequate and the British navy apparently hopelessly antiquated—he even suggested that Great Britain was inferior to Italy as a Mediterranean power—we must settle down to the single task of arming to the limit of our capacity.

Surely of all policies ever advocated for this country, this is the most inexplicable. We had always anticipated that British imperialists might take a leaf out of the French book and regard the League as a useful instrument for securing British interests. But to advocate that we first repudiate the League or, to use pre-war terms, that we deliberately disclaim all our allies and betray our covenanted word, and then, splendidly isolated, arm against all comers, is surely a policy fit only for Bedlam. When the *Daily Mail* advocates such a policy, we are not surprised. We are used to the irresponsibility of Northcliffe House, and the fact that the international anarchy it sponsors leads straight to a crippling armaments race to be followed by general war would not, we suppose, be a drawback from Lord Rothermere's standpoint. If we ask whether we hope to stand without friends in the world, Lord Rothermere would doubtless answer that we could find new allies in Fascist Germany and Fascist Japan, and get ready to help them against Soviet Russia. But we cannot believe that Mr. Garvin, who knows something of the ambitions of Japan and of Germany, can have any such sinister or foolish idea in his head. Nor do the experts we have consulted give any countenance to his strange notion that the hundreds of millions spent on the British and French navies and air forces have really left the League Powers disarmed and helpless in face of so vulnerable a State as Italy. Somebody must have been pulling Mr. Garvin's leg.

Essentially, the situation is simple. If, when the Council of the League meets next week, Great Britain is ready to state in concrete terms its readiness to support effective action at Geneva, the League may be revivified and Mussolini checkmated. And if it is also willing to initiate a frank discussion of the economic causes of war, on the lines suggested on several occasions in this journal and discussed in our correspondence columns this week by Commander King-Hall, the present emergency might quite well prove the beginning of a happier era for Europe. We know what the alternative is—a Europe dominated by Fascist States that know they can do what they like with impunity; a mad race for armaments on a scale incompatible with the existence of free institutions even in the remaining democracies; a short period of fear and hatred ending in a war which would ring down the curtain on Western civilisation. Our best hope is that the statesmen who meet at Geneva will at this last minute realise the horrors of that alternative and show that they are capable of the concerted action which may still avert catastrophe.

CONDITIONS OF WARFARE IN ABYSSINIA

I

THE normal military forces of Abyssinia consist of a standing army, virtually the Emperor's bodyguard, and the feudal levies which are the personal following of the great chieftains, each of whom has to supply a quota both to the standing army and on a general mobilisation. This system works satisfactorily enough in the north, where the chieftains are the great landowners, and where feudal tenure and service are understood and accepted as part of the social heritage. The personal armies of the chieftains owe allegiance to the chieftains and through them to the Emperor: they are maintained and trained by the chieftains, and every peasant is under the obligation of military service whenever called upon. They are, therefore, trained shots and accustomed to a sort of mediaeval military discipline. It is only the Emperor's bodyguard, estimated at approximately 30,000—though now swollen by an unknown number of conscripts—that has been trained by Belgian and Swedish officers along European lines. For the rest, subject though they are to a loose discipline, they may fairly be called individualists, since their mode of warfare is largely conditioned by their environment. To the Abyssinian in general his rifle is his most prized possession, and a gift of a few rounds of ammunition the most valuable introduction. He is his own armourer, and shows an amazing skill in effecting the most complicated repairs, as he is held criminally responsible should he on mobilisation fail to present himself with his rifle in good order.

In the conquered south, however, conditions are very different. Theoretically the feudal system is in force, and the Governors, appointed from the aristocracy, the cadet branches of noble families and from the Emperor's favourites, have the status of feudal lords. But this status is hollow. The only feudal following they have consists in the retinue and soldiers whom they bring with them. They correspond more nearly with the Commissioner of a Province in our own Protectorates, and their functions are to a large extent similar, with the exception that they are still involved in the feudal machine, in so far as their status carries with it the necessity to con-

tribute a quota to the national army when required. Their personal armies, however, are not feudal armies in the accepted sense, but a standing force of armed retainers whose duty it is to uphold the executive authority of the Governor and to control the pagan tribes, all of whom are comprehensively called Shankalla by the Abyssinians.

Southern Abyssinia is inhabited by a number of Hamitic and negroid tribes, some of whom, like the Kafa, now almost if not quite extinct, wielded considerable power in the past, while others, like the Galla, are still a force to be reckoned with. But for the most part the tribes are small and differ in no way from the adjacent tribes in the British Protectorates and in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Indeed in some cases, of which the Nuer and the Anywak afford the most flagrant examples, the arbitrary frontier bisects tribes, with a resultant difficulty of harmonious administration on either side. Nevertheless the fact that there has been no mass migration from Abyssinia in such cases proves that the Abyssinian Government has not been so harsh as is generally supposed. While, as is to be expected, several of these tribes have been impatient of control and others, the weaklings, have been exploited to the point of extermination, the feudal theory has been applied to a certain extent, and it is from this region that the tribal levies are raised to supplement at times of crisis the small standing armies of the Governors. Nearly all the tribes are of fine warrior stock and are first-class fighters, who in their natural surroundings would offer a formidable resistance to the best trained troops. It says a great deal for the adaptability of the Abyssinians that, despite the poverty of their equipment, they have been able to subjugate and control this vast region of warring tribes. They have never been popular and their exploitation of slavery as an economic makeshift has naturally alienated those tribes that have suffered in this way.

On the east and south-east the mountain fastnesses of Abyssinia proper are guarded by deserts in which roam extremely warlike tribes like the Danakil in the north and the Galla and Somali in the south. While these tribes are doubtless vulnerable to modern methods of warfare, it is possible to exaggerate their vulnerability as the difficulties of the campaign in British Somaliland after the war proved. They are both brave and elusive and the waterless stretches of desert are their best ally against anything short of attack by air. As soon as the highlands are reached, the air loses nearly all its value as an offensive medium. The altitude and the consequent rarity of the air not only make it impossible to carry heavy loads, but make it difficult for loaded planes to rise. The dense forests, precipitous gorges honeycombed with caves, the absence of pointers like roads and large towns, give the Abyssinians comparative immunity against attack by air. The nature of the terrain makes the use of mechanical transport and tanks almost impossible. It is a country admirably suited for ambushes and guerilla tactics, and the Abyssinians are adepts at this form of fighting. Their intelligence service is admirable: their tactics are to avoid pitched battles and to utilise the natural advantages in breaking up the forces of the enemy, who will then be vulnerable to unexpected attacks of short duration, both on the march and in camp. Attacking forces will find their progress slow, mountain tracks protected by rock avalanches, and wells and springs poisoned in advance. In the south the almost inaccessible mountains are guarded by rock fortresses at the most vulnerable points, fortresses which in the absence of heavy artillery can only be taken at enormous cost of life: and it is one thing to transport artillery over the mountains of northern Italy, near the army's base, and with every mechanical facility available, but quite a different thing when climate and environment conspire to handicap the attacking force, and when malaria, dysentery and scurvy have weakened the morale of the attackers.

One example may perhaps drive this home, even if in point of magnitude the comparison is ludicrous. I was once appointed to act as political officer on a military expedition against a small mountain tribe on the borders of Abyssinia, a tribe which differs little from those within Abyssinia itself. Our force consisted of three double companies of magnificently trained native troops, who in that climate and confronted with conditions such as we met—but conditions nevertheless considerably less arduous than are to be found in Abyssinia—are infinitely superior to any European troops. There was a full complement of machine and Lewis guns, and the British officers were men of long experience inured to bush warfare, not men fresh out from Europe. The terrain was mountainous and broken by precipitous gorges, up and down which the attacking forces had to move in single file, constantly menaced by ambushes, night attacks and rock avalanches. Forests afforded admirable cover for the enemy, and at the higher altitudes in the bamboo forests the bullets ricocheted off the bamboos in a manner as alarming to us as to the enemy. Progress was always slow, and on one occasion, when the undergrowth was appallingly thick and had to be cut away with machettes, we only covered two hundred yards in a single day, without seeing any of the enemy. The enemy, on the other hand, were so mobile that they nearly always anticipated our movements. The expedition dragged on for three months with hardly any result of a military nature: our casualties and theirs were about equal, though they depended on spears and possessed fewer than twenty rifles, most of which were so antiquated as to be dangerous to the user. We, both officers and men, inured though we were to the tropics, suffered considerably from the climatic conditions and the combination of altitude, sun and mountaineering: both malaria and dysentery intervened and even in three months we experienced a number of cases of scurvy. Our greatest shock was to discover, long after the expedition was over, that the enemy whose strength, deceived by their mobility, we estimated to be in the region of 10,000, actually numbered fewer than two thousand spearmen.

J. H. DRIBERG

(To be continued.)

THE COUNCIL MEETING

[This article by an expert in League procedure will serve, we hope, to clear away some of the prevalent haze about the extent of British responsibilities under the Covenant.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

APART from such impertinences as the suggestion—which Italy, apparently, intends to make in all seriousness—that Abyssinia should be expelled from the League, what are the elements of the problem with which the Council will be faced on September 4th, and what is the likely procedure?

The Council is required, in Mr. Eden's words, "to discharge the obligations placed upon it by the Covenant" in the face of a threat of war. At the first stage the question of sanctions does not arise; they operate only after a State has resorted to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles XII, XIII, and XV (pledges of peaceful settlement). Since sanctions are the crux it is natural and right that they should be fully discussed; but concentration of comment upon the *ultima ratio* of Article XVI has obscured the main purpose of the League which is the prevention of war, not the punishment of a war-maker. In accordance with Article XI the Member-States are expected to assume *collective responsibility* for war-prevention, for which the Council has ample resources deriving from its authority as the executive instrument of the League.

First of all, the Council will receive Mr. Eden's report on the failure of the Paris negotiations, thus for the first time taking cognisance of the dispute as a whole. It will also have to consider the report (or reports) of the Conciliation Commission. A "technical" verdict in favour of Italy on the Wal-Wal question would not, of course, affect in the slightest the fundamental issue, i.e., whether a State Member shall in the name of *sacro egoismo* enforce its will upon another State by threats and military means—and incidentally break no less than nine treaties. Nine days after the Wal-Wal incident

Abyssinia communicated to the League a statement that it was prepared to satisfy Italian demands if its responsibility was proved. So that this question should not occupy much of the Council's time.

The language of Article XI is unequivocal—" the League *shall* take any action . . . " etc. (It is worth recalling, as evidence of the intentions of the Covenant-makers that, when this clause first came up for discussion in the League of Nations Commission in Paris, the wording was : " The High Contracting Parties reserve the right to take any action . . . " and it was altered to the present mandatory text, on a motion of Lord Cecil.) And the Council has in fact handled some thirty disputes under this Article. But the procedure of Article XI is entirely elastic, and at the beginning the Council may well prefer to employ more formal methods, in order to test the temperature, so to speak, of the patient. Abyssinia has invoked Articles X and XV as well as XI. The Council could bring into play, too, Article XII, relating to " any dispute likely to lead to a rupture," which prescribes arbitration or inquiry ; but as this Article also contains the pledge to delay war-making, in any case until three months after the decision reached, it is hardly appropriate to the present mood of Caesar.

Assuming that Italy is represented at the Council meeting, eager to state her grievances, there is almost bound to be a further stage of conciliation. The representatives of Italy and Abyssinia will be invited to submit their arguments to a committee of the Council acting either under Article XI or Article XV, par. 1. In the present instance the process of inquiry should not take up much time. It is hardly likely that League mediation will succeed where the Three-Power Conference failed, and Italy will jib, in the first place, at being treated on the same footing as the barbarian she is proposing to civilise ; in any case any recommendation made by the Council acting as a conciliation body has no binding effect. Even an unanimous report minus the votes of the parties leaves the situation exactly as it was, except that an aggrieved State which complies with the recommendations is guaranteed against the added insult of having war waged against it (!) : while, in the absence of unanimity, States members regain the right to take independent action as they think fit, without any further obligation to the community represented in the League. Thus, the path of Article XV may be a *cul-de-sac* or, more precisely, a way of escape from " collective resp nsibility." There is finally the possibility of recourse to the Assembly. But its report similarly amounts to little more than a moral gesture.

Having exhausted its good offices, the Council will have to pass from its powers to settle disputes to its powers to prevent war. Here the rule of unanimity obtains, i.e. (Article V, par. 1), the agreement of all the Members of the League represented at the meeting. The question arises whether, in this political capacity, it can be blocked by the vote of the State endangering peace. Council practice has itself varied. On the occasion of the Sino-Japanese dispute the Council, not wishing to do anything, adopted the argument usefully supplied by the legal experts that, except where expressly provided otherwise, as in Article XV, unanimity was to be interpreted as including the disputants. When war was imminent between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925, on the other hand, the Council brushed aside the parties and sent a peremptory demand that there should be no fighting, pending examination of the dispute under Article XV.

In the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee of Thirteen (set up by the Council on April 17th last), which has recently reported, opinions were similarly divided. Those who supported *qualified* unanimity invoked ordinary common sense. An Advisory Opinion of the Permanent Court in the Mosul case declared it to be an accepted principle of international law that no State can be judge in its own case, and a rule of legal interpretation whereby " an interpretation which makes it impossible for a provision to attain its purpose should be rejected." One member who took the opposite view pointed out that, without having strictly legal validity, a recommendation voted by all the members of the Council except the State threatening a breach of the peace would possess very great moral and political authority.

The Council can take as much or as little note as it likes of these lawyers' quips. It will also have at its disposal the expert study of *preventive* and *deterrent* measures " to be applied to countries repudiating their obligations . . . and engaging in extensive war-like preparations " produced by the economic sub-committee. " Measures recommended under Article XI," the report says, " would be directed to removing a threat of war . . . they would have a preventive character . . . their object would be to check preparations for war by depriving the State endangering peace of particular supplies." Under this heading would come (1) the withholding of key-products required for the production of arms, (2) the interruption of the export trade of the State endangering peace, and (3) measures of financial pressure such as the withholding of credit facilities.

Here are the sinews of peace. " Were we determined to defend the Covenant as we defend Malta "—in Sir Norman Angell's words—Britain can carry the Council with her in such measures of war-prevention, the purpose and character of which are completely distinct from the *penalties* set forth in Article XVI. They can be applied without raising up the bogy of the freedom of the seas between Great Britain and America, though that bogy may perhaps be disregarded in view of President Roosevelt's statement that the U.S.A. will not impede any measures of war prevention taken by the League. Opinions will differ about whether such preventive methods can now be effective. Sanctions, taken after Italy has been declared an aggressor, could certainly be made effective, but raise graver possibilities. No doubt the League statesmen will look for some *via media* between the rigours of Article XVI and letting Abyssinia " be thrown to the wolves of the Capitol," with perhaps merely a solemn censure of Italy's brigand methods.

A LONDON DIARY

THE eleventh penal and penitentiary Congress held last week in Berlin achieved nothing, but it obtained far greater publicity than the previous congresses which all of them marked real advances in penal reform. Good luck in the shape of a decision by the Prague Congress of 1930 to hold their 1935 meeting in Berlin, then a centre of progressive ideas in prison administration, presented the Nazis with an ideal opportunity for obtaining a semblance of world approval for their prison and penal methods. A member of the British delegation tells me that the whole farcical Congress was arranged for this propaganda purpose. The delegates met in the Kroll Opera House under the shadow of an immense Swastika, depicted on a curtain behind the president's chair. On either side of this emblem were ranged, as if in homage, the flags of the forty-nine nations represented at the Congress. Beside the president, the impassive Brumke, president at the Reichstag fire trial, and chief justice both under the Weimar regime and the Third Reich, sat government officials and prominent penal reformers from the visiting delegations. Nazi jurists and politicians seized the opportunity to harangue the assembly on behalf of more brutality and less law in the penal system. There must be plenty of Germans who regard Dr. Frank's statement that the " Nazi jurist is a fanatical exponent of the principle of reprisal," as true but discreditable. But the Nazis could not have found a more convincing advertisement for their return to barbarism than photographs of international jurists of high repute from many countries politely applauding Dr. Frank. When the bolder foreigners (who, I am glad to see, were led by the British) ventured to differ, the German authorities seem to have taken their protests as insults to their hospitality. They were outraged at the request to see Thaelmann and naturally the German press reported nothing that told against the Nazi view.

In the committees (to which of course the press was not admitted) the foreign delegates could and did put up a good fight; they prevented the carrying of a report which in effect condemned and rejected all the advances made in penal reform during the last fifty years. They blocked a resolution approving extensive limitation on the right of appeal in all criminal cases. But such tactical victories in committee could not undo the harm done by the apparent acceptance by the official foreign delegates of the views put forward in public session by Dr. Gürtner and Dr. Goebbels. If official British delegates are photographed smiling and clapping when the German Minister of Justice has just concluded a speech in favour of abandoning what has until now been the foundations of civilised law—*nulla poena sine lege*—they cannot escape some responsibility for lending themselves to Nazi propaganda; and if courtesy demands such insincere applause that is only another reason for regret that official delegations were appointed to go to a Conference which was nothing but a sham and a gift for Dr. Goebbels.

* * *

That slick and acid product of American journalism, *Time*, (which I see, by the way, is again in trouble over here for treating members of the Royal Family with insufficient respect) has, as one of its offshoots, a monthly news reel which made a much trumpeted first appearance in London at a trade show on Tuesday. It applied cinema technique to news in a way which England has been slow to learn and which offers an appalling opportunity to the propagandist. The editors of *The March of Time* take a piece of news like the U.S.A. "war-game" in the Pacific and build up a story round it, not only of the actual manœuvres but of the diplomatic exchanges between Washington and Tokio. Actors impersonate the statesmen and we see the bland likeness of the Japanese ambassador telephoning to the U.S.A. Secretary of State. "Of course, Mr. Secretary, we all realise navies will be navies." The propagandist element in the story of Senator Huey Long's rise to fame is subtle. Cleverly edited pictures of the Kingfish himself in various stages of eloquence are designed to throw him and his policy into disrepute. The laws of libel would probably make a full development of the same technique impossible in this country. But if I am to accept the testimony of several regular frequentors of the cinema, Gaumont-British appear to be smitten with the same idea. Their survey of the Italian-Abyssinian crisis last week lasted only five minutes. In that time the editors, to quote a correspondent, succeeded not only in giving the shots of preparation and departure from Italy a twist in favour of Mussolini and in conveying the idea that war is inevitable, but in making a direct appeal through larger and bolder captions, superimposed on the picture, rather after the manner of Russian films, for isolationism. "France will not move against Italy" was one of these subtitles, and it was followed by "Britain must not crusade alone for seven million Abyssinians," sandwiched in between shots of Baldwin and Eden. The reel ended with a rousing appeal to Imperial fervour, accompanied by the strains of "Land of Hope and Glory." The total effect was of a photographed leader from the *Daily Express*.

* * *

I was so interested in this account that I went to a Gaumont-British News Reel on Tuesday night. I gather that there had been complaints, possibly from important quarters. At any rate, not a word or a picture about Italy or Abyssinia appeared in the programme, which contained an excellent science film, a pretty "let's pretend" coloured comic, a picture of the King in a kilt and the usual sporting events. A good enough News Reel though a trifle dull, with no reference to the one news topic of the week. The only grouse I had was the inclusion of an interview with an oily woman who talked about astrology. To encourage superstition ranks high in my list of the less venial sins. However this astrologer was so naive that the audience hooted with laughter. Everyone born in November (I think it was) had had a bad time and known financial losses, but this year if they pushed hard they would all reap a golden harvest. Much the same, it seemed, was true of people born under Cancer, and they, incidentally, all loved their homes and if they were young would soon be married or at least begin thinking about marriage . . . . everything was improving, London and England as a whole was being treated by the stars kindly just now. . . . Oh, boys, it was just grand!

* * *

I do not always agree with Sir Norman Angell, but I know of no writer whose books are more likely to set people thinking clearly and realistically about foreign politics. I see that my view is shared by an anonymous headmaster, who has had the sense to offer an open prize of £100 for the best "lesson" in the form of an essay or statement of from 1,500 to 2,000 words suitable for use in schools or with young people, explaining the guiding principles enunciated in Sir Norman Angell's three books, *The Great Illusion*, *The Unseen Assassins*, and *Preface to Peace*. The judges will be Gilbert Murray, the Headmaster of Rugby, Sir Philip Gibbs and Sir Norman himself. This seems a good opportunity for a teacher with ideas in his or her head.

* * *

I have been reading—or rather reading in—the new *Life and Letters*, now a fat half-crown quarterly, Oxford and Cambridge blue in colour and, in the first issue, 226 pages long. It is edited by Mr. Robert Herring and Mr. Petrie Townshend, whose aim will evidently be to produce as big and varied a miscellany as possible. Almost every shade of literary activity and opinion is represented in its pages, from Havelock Ellis to Gertrude Stein, André Gide to H. D., Osbert Sitwell to Michael Roberts. A vaguely contemporary trend is suggested by the amended title, *Life and Letters To-day*, but otherwise it is almost bewilderingly "all-round." Can one imagine, say, a political quarterly appealing equally to Communists, Socialists, Liberals and Conservatives? Yet that is the sort of appeal which a literary magazine must make in England if it is to enjoy more than a very limited circulation, and in doing so it naturally loses character. Mr. Wyndham Lewis's *Blast*—the most brilliantly individual review we have had in the last twenty-five years—was read almost exclusively by writers and painters. *Life and Letters To-day* inevitably lacks that sort of imprint, and the pervasive personality given to the early numbers of *Life and Letters* by Mr. Desmond MacCarthy. It is, however, full of excellent things—a chapter for example from Havelock Ellis's forthcoming book on Rousseau, and André Gide's recent address delivered at the International Congress of Writers in Paris; and if the editors can keep up their present munificence, the public should at any rate be persuaded that they are getting their money's worth.

* * *

I offer the following incident to anyone who is making a collection of London mysteries. I was sitting at lunch this week in a very crowded and noisy London restaurant. Opposite was a tall, smartly dressed man of under forty. He was wearing a regimental tie. He had finished his lunch and he sat with his head lowered, apparently staring wretchedly on the floor. When at last he paid his bill and went, the waiter said to me: "See him? Been here two hours, eats his meal, sits like that. Funny, isn't it?" "What's the matter?" I asked. "Dunno," said the waiter. "Been coming here and doing that every day for eight years. Eats his meal, then sits like that. Eight years." "Odd," I said. "Of course," said the waiter cheering up, "we drop things on him. We push him this way and that. We knock into him accidental, so to speak. He don't alter. No, he isn't asleep." "Well, what is it?" I asked. "He's thinking," said the waiter bitterly. "Two solid hours every day for eight years, *thinking*. That's what it is. Just thinking. It don't half get our goat in here. It isn't natural."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. John Donald.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

The Rev. C. H. Hulbert, minister of Highgate Central Hall, making a dramatic appeal for peace in the threatened war between Italy and Abyssinia when preaching last night, concluded by saying: "If God marshalled the insect world in Africa, Mussolini would be nowhere."—*Daily Record.*

For interfering with an ostrich at Whipsnade Zoo . . . Lily Greatbatch was fined £1 and 10s. costs at Leighton Buzzard to-day. . . . "She put her hand through the railings of an enclosure where the ostriches were and pulled a feather out of a bird," said the solicitor . . . "The rest of the party laughed and she plucked another." Defendant sent a letter to the magistrates saying she was not aware that she was breaking the law. Now she realised that it was wrong and silly.—Report in *News Chronicle.*

Muriel Draper (who wrote *Music at Midnight*) turned up at Cecil Beaton's for cocktails, having dropped in on London at the tail-end of the season, after a year's sojourn in Moscow where she lived with nine Soviets in a three-roomed flat.—*Vogue.*

Herbert Hilder, 18, of Egerton Avenue, Hextable, who killed a dog by striking it on the head with a hammer, was shown leniency at Dartford yesterday after he had told the magistrate he had joined the Army.—*Daily Telegraph.*

Birmingham factories are reported to be expanding because cruising holidays are causing an increased demand for souvenirs from abroad. —*Times.*

"When tunnies refuse to bite, or the weather is too rough to go after these giant fish, have a little revolver practice by shooting at porpoises," says Mr. W. W. Dowding, the young British sportsman, who returned to Scarborough yesterday after a tunny-fishing expedition on which he caught a 484-pounder. "Porpoises," says Mr. Dowding, "are very numerous, more numerous than tunny at times, and it is great sport taking potshots at them. It is just about impossible to get a porpoise to take bait on a line. The only way to kill them is to shoot them, in which case you have very little chance of landing the fish, or of harpooning them, which is very difficult indeed."—*Scarborough Evening News and Daily Post.*

As regards the visitors to the bungalows, these now pay five and six guineas per week rental, and it is evident that such a class of people who are willing to pay such a price can hardly be termed "undesirable."—Letter in *Observer.*

"If two men come into my office, and one wears a silk hat and one a bowler, the one in the silk hat always gets the first chance," said Lord Runciman, speaking here to-day. "I recall the day when in my London office the staff started to wear bowlers. I offered to pay for it if they would only wear silk hats.—*Daily Telegraph.*

A FOUR YEARS' RETROSPECT

WITH a General Election soon to come, and an uncertainty about the politics of the next Parliament and the complexion of the Government we are to enjoy, it seems profitable to look back, with four years' experience behind us, on the British crisis of 1931. At the time, the situation looked very different from different political angles. The May Committee saw ruin in an unbalanced budget; the bankers and financiers prophesied sheer disaster, and the loss of Britain's international prestige, if we were driven off gold. Conservatives demanded a stiff protective tariff in order to maintain industrial profits, stave off ruin from our manufacturers, and correct a seriously "unfavourable" balance of trade and international payments. A clamour went up that the Unemployment Fund was being drained by bogus claims, and that strict national economy was indispensable in order to balance the budget and reduce the burden of taxation. On the other hand, the supporters of the Labour Government were asking more and more insistently for larger instalments of reform and at least some earnest of the Government's Socialist intentions. The educationists were demanding secondary schooling for all, based on a generous interpretation of the Hadow Report; and a good many Liberals, as well as Socialists, were campaigning in favour of a policy designed to provide work rather than doles for a large fraction of the unemployed.

Amid these conflicting counsels the MacDonald Government hovered uncertain of its course. It was aware of increasing difficulties on all sides; but there was no agreement among its members about the best ways of meeting them. Some members of the Cabinet toyed with the idea of a "revenue" tariff, to be used to provide a fund for subsidising exports, and others with the idea of devaluing the pound, or going off the gold standard altogether. But Mr. Snowden, as he then was, made it a matter of principle to oppose all such proposals; and, in a divided and wavering Cabinet, no one was strong enough to stand against him. If, however, both currency depreciation and a tariff were to be ruled out, there was only one alternative left—a policy of drastic "economy" and deflation, which was bound both to antagonise most of the Government's supporters and, for a time, to cause a big increase in unemployment. With the "Anomalies" Act, the Cabinet played half-heartedly at this policy; but it did not dare to follow it to lengths that could have produced any appreciable effect. What it did was to let things drift, until it was sharply reminded by the bankers of the sheer impossibility of having matters both ways. The bankers insisted on drastic "economies" as the only condition on which the gold parity of the pound could be maintained; and in this they were perfectly correct, for if the Government forfeited the confidence of the monied men, and they decided accordingly to shift as much as possible of their mobile money abroad, nothing could save the pound, or allow the Government to renew its short-term borrowings on tolerable terms. The bankers had the whip hand, as they always have had in a financial crisis.

This is the situation which was widely characterised in 1931 as the "bankers' ramp." The bankers, up to the very last moment, were dead against a suspension of the gold standard and all for drastic "economies" at the expense of the social services. The Government could have escaped from their domination by decreeing a departure from gold; but if it would not do this, it had no third way out. It had either to "economise" or to resign. Actually, its resignation was precipitated by the international bankers, who refused to advance it money unless it agreed to "put its financial house in order"; which meant in effect to cut unemployment pay. It was the height of folly for the Government to borrow huge sums from the French and American bankers in order to stay on gold at the existing parity; for when once the financial interests had declared their lack of confidence the drain of gold could not be stopped except by measures which would have cost a Labour Government all its support. But Mr. Snowden had read some orthodox text-book in his remote youth; and he, backed by the bankers, clung to the gold standard with an obstinacy worthy of a better cause.

Mr. Snowden must have been aware by this time that the gold standard could be preserved only by the Government doing precisely what the bankers were telling it to do. He is said, long before that, to have been urging severe "economy" upon his colleagues. Probably he had already ceased, like his political leader, to be a Socialist in anything but name. But the majority of the Cabinet were still Socialists of a sort, and would not have Mr. Snowden's deflationary policy, which was sound, orthodox, capitalist doctrine. They still called upon him to square the circle. To that situation there could be only one end—the end of the Government. When it came to the point, Mr. Snowden and Mr. MacDonald found that they preferred the City's confidence to a Socialist voyage in a leaking

ship. The majority of the Cabinet, and the vast majority of Labour's supporters in the country, preferred some sort of Socialism, or at least rejected out of hand the idea of accepting a policy of "economy" dictated by their political and economic enemies.

It is an old story now how the "National" Government, formed to "save the pound," promptly changed its tune when power was in its hands. As long as "confidence" was restored nothing else mattered. It was one thing for a Labour Government to get out of its difficulties by devaluation, and thus enable itself to go on with a policy of social reform of which the financial interests strongly disapproved. It was quite another when the departure from gold was carried through under the respectable auspices of a "National" Coalition, guaranteed to respect the rights of property, to call a halt to social legislation and to insist on drastic retrenchments in the existing social services. Up to that point a tariff and devaluation had usually been advanced as alternative methods of redressing the balance of payments. The "National" Government, without a blush or a protest from any respectable quarter, was able to adopt them both, and to do this under the auspices of the most fanatical free trader and adherent of the gold standard in the whole country. Mr. Snowden was dropped later on; but for the moment he was a trump card of the reactionaries. He became a court card when he had done his work, and then a joker, easily discarded from the regular pack.

Four years later, we can see that within its assumptions the new Government did not do altogether badly. It was, indeed, at the outset in a good deal of a muddle. It was quite unable to realise that the depreciation of the pound, especially when it was supplemented by a high tariff, altogether invalidated the arguments in favour of rigid "economy," which had been valid only as deflationary measures necessary if the value of the pound was to be kept unchanged. It went on for some time deflating and "economising" as if it had remained within the fold of strict economic orthodoxy. Doubtless, not all its members were unconscious of the contradiction; some were eager above all else to seize the chance of cutting down the social services, stopping educational development, and giving the unemployed a good bang below the belt. But gradually the new Government had to recognise that deflation and devaluation would not fit together. If "economy" were insisted upon, the pound would obstinately rise in international value, and the exporters would be again in trouble. "Economy" was gradually and unostentatiously dropped out of the position of primacy which it had held at first. Private persons were positively adjured to spend instead of hoarding their incomes; and, as the rate of interest fell, business men were pressed to borrow, and efforts were made to counteract the drop in working-class housing by stimulating private enterprise to build more houses for better-class purchasers, and even tenants. The Building Societies began to have the time of their lives.

On this basis, things in general began to improve, aided after 1932 by some alleviation of the economic crisis in the world as a whole. Government spokesmen talked less about the need for tightening belts, and more about the wonderful recovery which their sagacious policy was bringing to pass. The capitalists and financiers naturally felt more confidence in them than in a pack of Socialists—even Socialists who had shown no desire to practise anything beyond mild social reform; and under capitalism the confidence of capitalists and financiers is an indispensable asset in times of stress. It is true that all the vast improvements celebrated by Government orators still left the basic industries sorely depressed, the distressed areas fully as distressed as ever, and unemployment well above the two million mark. But the South of England, where most of the "best" people live, saw little of this. It saw, instead, houses and factories rising in ribbons along the lines of the new arterial roads, imports remaining cheap despite the high tariff and the devalued pound, a cheerful world of silk stockings, sun-bathers, cinemas and wireless sets of increasing magnificence, and, what was best of all, recovering business profits. It saw Great Britain, so far from losing face internationally by the departure from gold, actually gaining reputation for her good management of the crisis and becoming the centre of a "sterling area" of comparative monetary stability. The cry of the unemployed and distressed was heard faintly from afar; but it seemed far better to count our blessings than to go on harping on our disorders.

The "National" Government had "saved the country." It had "saved" it—but from what? From Socialism, say some people; but nothing is so certain as that the country was in no danger of Socialism in 1931. What the "National" Government did save us from was indecision—sheer dithering inability to settle on anything at all. Its policy was not good or well-conceived; for it had no policy. It did, in fact, exactly the opposite of what it set out to do when it came to power. It did what its leaders had been most fervently denouncing up to the last moment. But it did do something; and for the moment that was what mattered. Having no principles, it had no difficulty in departing from them. It surmounted the crisis by letting itself do what circumstances dictated.

The moral is this. If we are not to be governed in perpetuity by opportunist conservatism, the Labour Party, which alone can provide an alternative Government, must have a clearly understood policy for foul weather as well as for fair. It is easy enough to devise a fair-weather Labour programme, and even, in fair weather, to carry some of it out. But for Labour in power the political weather will never stay fair for long, with unconfident capitalists whistling up foul winds against it. The last Labour Government failed because, in a crisis, it had no idea what to do, and no common agreement even about what it should try to do. Its successors do not deserve to get a majority, nor are they likely to do so, if they merely contemplate the reforms they can carry out without forfeiting the confidence of bankers. Mr. Lloyd George can do that: so can the *Next Five Years* group. There is more to be said for the new Liberalism than for Socialism which is not Socialist.

TO GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

[The poet has written to a friend, acclaiming the attack on Abyssinia and protesting that he still feels the shame of Adowa "like a scar upon his shoulder."]

For forty years he shuddered—now we know it—
Scarred with shame.
(Nothing so sensitive as in a poet
Honour's flame.)

But now the miracle. Now the mystic healing
For such grief.
(How should *we* guess how men of finer feeling
Find relief!)

His Italy, no more base bonds upon her,
Strides to war,
Trampling nine treaties—(could white soul of honour
Wish for more?)

Bombers above; before, a gas-cloud smoking;
Tanks behind;
Against men maskless, half-unarmed and choking,
Poisoned, blind.

When was such chivalry—courage more than knightly—
Since Roncesvaux!
(Strange that the lips one Duse loved, could lightly
Sink so low.)

Blood never washed from brow of man nor shoulder
Scar, nor shame:
But their own words can leave worse brands to smoulder
On their fame.

F. L. LUCAS

LESS NOISE, PLEASE!

NOISE, it is clear, is doomed. Despite the fact that its devotees number millions, they are so hopelessly individualistic and unorganised that a small but well-disciplined body of the sworn enemies of noise is driving them from one position after another. In its first annual report, the Anti-Noise League boasts of the subjugation during recent months of enormous fleets of milk-carts. For generations past the milk-cart has played a conspicuous part in the noisiness of town life. As it made its jangling progress through the streets in the early morning, it announced to all honest citizens that the sun had risen. There was a kind of joy-bells gaiety in the clanging of can and bottle. The milkman as he pushed his cart or shouted orders to his horse had an air of cheerfulness uncommon to the world's workers. As he approached each doorstep with the blameless fluid, he himself joined in the music with a cheerily sung "Milk-oh!", though he seldom pronounced the syllables so clearly. Then, as he moved off, the clatter of wheel, can and glass would recede down the street, and the householder would know that the procession of life was on the march again.

That, however, is now all coming to an end. The milk-cart has been equipped with rubber tyres on the wheels, and the can and the bottle no longer perform their early-morning dance. There is no orchestra of rattling wheels to liven them up to the mood of dancing, and a deathly stillness reigns as if their travelling theatre had been transformed into a mortuary. Watch the milkman himself and see the effect on his spirits. He now delivers his commodities furtively, silently, like the grocer and the butcher. He is like a bird forbidden to sing. He walks with the drooping air of an exile. He who was once licensed to make a nuisance of himself to an entire neighbourhood has become as inconspicuous as a boy delivering newspapers. The fact that the milk-cart has been silenced without even a formal protest from the milkmen affords some evidence of the almost irresistible power of the Anti-Noise League.

What is most surprising in the situation is that no noise-hater seems to have thought of rubber tyres for milk-carts till quite recently. One would have imagined that, as soon as rubber tyres were invented, human beings would decide that the first vehicles to be equipped with them should be the noisiest. Instead of this they chose the comparatively silent bicycle as the vehicle that must first be silenced, and went on from this to the comparatively silent private carriage and hansom-cab. They left the noisiest vehicles of all to the last—the lorry and the milk-cart—as though the object of rubber were not to decrease noise but to increase the comfort of those who already travelled on fairly comfortable vehicles. And, indeed, it soon became clear that the elimination of noise was not the object aimed at, for no sooner had the hansom-cab been fitted with pneumatic tyres than the horse was decked with an array of bells that filled the streets with a sleigh-bell music till the small hours of the morning. In the same way, a silent private carriage was discarded as worthless and gave way to a motor car with a loud engine, a loud horn, loud brakes, and loud gear-changes. Here, it will be seen, the human race was given an unprecedented chance of abolishing noise in the streets, but the way in which the human race used its opportunity was to invent the motor bicycle and the sports car. Big noises took the place of moderate noises, and all the benefits of wood pavements, asphalte pavements and rubber tyres were nullified by man's passionate and noisy zeal for progress.

The silencing of the milk-cart may or may not show that human nature has changed. There have been many victories in the war against noise in the past, but they have usually been succeeded by an increase of noise. It looks as though, whatever steps may be taken against it, noise will find out a way of returning, simply because a large number of human beings love making a noise. Take the motor car, for instance. Many of the noises associated with motor vehicles have been suppressed. No longer are servants allowed to stand on doorsteps and whistle for taxis till they are blue in the face. No longer is the motorist allowed to sound his awakening horn all through the night in the streets of London. No longer is he allowed to drive a car that makes a deafening noise as it speeds along. No sooner are these triumphs achieved for silence, however, than some one is inspired with the idea of equipping motor cars with wireless sets. The unhappy motorist, apparently, cannot endure the silence of modern life, and must have some noise going on to remind him that the world is not a graveyard. All that he needs to keep his nerves steady as he drives is to hear a crooner howling "I know why you're crying." That reassures him that life is still sane and that he is not yet driving a ghost-car in the land of the silent dead.

It is said that the police already have their eye on this noise-loving motorist; but, according to newspaper reports, what they are worried about is not the fact that he will be making an infernal noise with his wireless set, but that the noises he hears will be so enchanting that they will distract his attention from his driving. They propose, therefore—so it is said—to forbid him to turn on his wireless set in built-up areas, but to permit him to turn it on in the country. It is easy to understand the point of view of the motorist who, appalled by the eerie silence of the country in late summer, longs to find relief from it in the noises to which he is accustomed. An occasional robin or wren, a passing bee, a cock crowing in the distance, is not enough. The joy of life expresses itself in a crowded chorus. If nature cannot make enough music, then let a machine make it. Civilisation is simply an effort to make up for the deficiencies of nature. Hence the wireless set in the motor car in the country lane and the gramophone in the punt on the river. For myself, I prefer the noise of an old-fashioned milk-cart in a London street; and, if the anti-noise campaign merely results in the abolition of noisy milk-carts in noisy places and leaves us in their stead noisy wireless sets in quiet places, I shall consider it a failure.

The suppression of noise, however, I agree, must be gone about circumspectly. There are noises, for example, that many people hate, and yet that most of us would be reluctant to see forcibly abolished. The noise of church-bells in towns, for example. Fifty per cent. of church-bells are merely a nuisance, superfluous as a means of summoning worshippers to church, and very unpleasant to the ear. At the same time, I would not give my vote for their abolition. I should be content with setting up a censorship of bells which would permit only the most musical bells to be rung. Oxford or Assisi without its bells might be a better place in which to sleep, but it would not be a better place in which to live. But I have known bells that were musically no better than a bad second to milk-carts. These I would prohibit ruthlessly—possibly, providing a new peal at the expense of the State.

With street-cries I should never dream of interfering. I regret, indeed, that so many of them have disappeared already. I like to hear the strangled voice of the itinerant coal-seller as he looks up at the expressionless faces of the houses he passes and shouts what sounds like "Old cup o' tea! Old cup o' tea!" The pulse of life seems quickened when the newsboy begins yelling: "Three o'clock winner! Three o'clock winner!" As for the lavender seller's cry, it is a song that almost reconciles one to the beginning of the end of summer. When I first came to London the "Mi'-o!" of the milkman struck my ear as pleasantly as the call of a new bird.

I should hate, again, to see the suppression of music in main streets, and I should permit flutes and bagpipes everywhere. Street singers, however, should be made to pass a test before they are permitted to leave the more crowd d thoroughfares.

On the road-drill, on the other hand, I should have no mercy. It ought either to be forbidden or to be silenced. It may be that the workers who perform upon this horrid instrument get to love the sound of it as the woodpecker love:

the sound of his rattle. But, even for their sakes, one cannot reasonably be asked to tolerate much longer this last noise to escape from Hell. On the other hand, one may as well recognise that, if we abolish it, something worse may take its place. Civilisation has always a new noise up its sleeve; and it is usually a worse one. Having defeated the milkman, however, the Anti-Noise League may well feel heartened for its far more difficult task—the defeat of the really modern machine. Y.Y.

Correspondence

HELP FOR ABYSSINIA

We believe that many must feel towards the Abyssinian people a personal responsibility which, for various reasons, possibly valid, is not being met. Italy, by her mobilisation in Africa, has already committed what would be considered an act of war if Ethiopia was another European Power. Events are rapidly leading to a one-sided massacre of people—some partially armed, others unarmed—by a well-equipped force. As Englishmen we shall be partly responsible—on account of the Arms embargo—for Ethopia's lack of arms and munitions. We belong to a nation which is a member of the League of Nations and co-signatory of treaties fully justifying the Abyssinians in believing themselves safe from acts of wanton aggression. The Labour Party, in particular, is traditionally bound to oppose the exploitation of one race by another and has a special interest in weak and coloured peoples.

Once hostilities commence neither prayers nor recriminations against other members of the League will relieve us from personal responsibility. For those who believe that the responsibility is real, it would seem—after consultation with the Ethiopian Legation—that the following methods are open to us:

(1) Personal Service.

(*a*) The Abyssinians could make use of trained officers. Fitness and age are obvious considerations. There are at present no funds available for paying the passage to Abyssinia—about £50.

Applications should be sent to the Legation, 13, Elm Park Gardens, London, S.W.10.

It must, of course, be understood that after the outbreak of hostilities, if Italy is still considered "a friendly Power," the Foreign Enlistment Act will apply.

(*b*) As members of the Red Cross.

(2) If personal service is impracticable, we can help by contributing either:

(*a*) To a defence fund which had already been opened. The money in the fund will be entirely at the disposal of the Ethiopian Government.

(*b*) To a special fund, earmarked for Red Cross work.

We feel that these practical means of assisting an oppressed coloured race should be given greater publicity.

G. T. GARRATT
C. L'E. MALONE
J. H. DRIBERG

PEACEFUL CHANGE

SIR,—The British Government went into labour last week and there was some expectancy that a child might be born holding in its right hand the Covenant and in its left the British Fleet—which notwithstanding Mr. Garvin's laments in last Sunday's *Observer* is not yet a negligible quantity in world affairs. These hopes were not fulfilled, some say there has been a miscarrriage, but for my part I prefer to believe that Britannia has taken a dose of twilight sleep, and that we shall yet astonish the French, ourselves and most of all "Il Duce." For once in a way the statement that we are faced with a first class crisis is no exaggeration, and I believe that the events of the next few weeks will prove a real turning point in post-war history. We now have a wonderful chance to do two things. Firstly to so use our influence and power that the world shall witness the unprecedented spectacle of a system of collective security which works; secondly to insist that once our first purpose is achieved steps shall be taken to examine in an objective manner the grievances real or imaginary of the "have not" nations, vis-a-vis the "have gots." The chief problem of the times to come—and they are not far off—will be whether or not we can devise a procedure whereby changes in the political and economic structure of international society can be effected in a peaceful manner. This is not an academic question, for apart from the Italian problem we shall soon be presented with some demands from Berlin. One of the most important aspects of this problem is the question of access to raw materials; another is the control of waterways such as the Suez Canal and of air-routes which are of international importance. Collective security is but a means to an end, which is that in a world freed from the menace of predatory wars the pre-requisites would exist for real international economic and political co-operation.

If the British Government are prepared to give the world a lead in this matter there would seem to be a good chance of doing now what ought to have been done in 1919. The attempt so far as it was made at Versailles to relay the foundations of world order was doomed to failure by a war-poisoned atmosphere. We may be given a second chance on September 4th. It is probable that we shall have to await the conclusion of another great war before we get a third. STEPHEN KING-HALL

Hartfield House,
Headley, Hants.

SIR,—While Italy is engaged in Abyssinia, let us not forget that Germany is preparing the biggest army and air force in Europe to gain power to enforce the human right to use a world made for all men. Why not at once move to end the Abyssinian dispute by facing honestly the great question of which it is a small factor?

Britain and France, at the League Council meeting of September 4th, could submit a joint resolution expressing their desire to do justice to Italy and Germany in the matter of colonial opportunity, and their intention to formulate a definite scheme, the main outlines of which could be at once stated. The immediate notification of this intention to Italy and Germany would not only enable the Duce to accept peace with honour and Germany to rejoin the League, but prevent another world war.

The alternative is to burke the plain fact that to condemn great peoples to unmerited poverty is to make war upon them not less cruel and far more effective than that made with guns.

Royal Societies Club. LEO CHIOZZA MONEY

OPINION IN ITALY

SIR,—I have just returned from a visit to Italy, where I found the temper of the people very different from that which some of your correspondents would have us believe.

The result of efficient propaganda has been to convince the majority of the Italian people that they have a right to expansion in Ethiopia, and many who are not usually in favour of Mussolini are his firm supporters in this project.

The attitude of the British Government, who, they consider, have only used the excuse of supporting the League in order to safeguard British interests in Africa, has done much to strengthen their belief; and even the few opponents of the scheme with whom I talked were most sceptical of what a café proprietor called "the British Government's sudden enthusiasm for the League," pointing out that since Britain had been content to take a negative attitude towards the Japanese-Chinese and the Chaco wars, and to disregard its treaties by making a private naval agreement with Germany, the threat of sanctions in the present case was entirely illogical, and must be merely an effort to further British imperial policy. C. MERVYN DALLEY

Sutton, Surrey.

SIR,—I enclose an extract from a letter from a private correspondent in Italy who has lived there and mixed intimately with official and social Fascist circles for many years.

> I and all my family and relations and nearly all our friends are Fascists, some of us from the very earliest beginnings of Fascism which we still consider a truly wonderful ideal and the founder a great genius.
>
> But since the "Party" took over the control of the whole nation, crushed, imprisoned, deported, or killed all opponents, and destroyed all other parties, the officials they put into all offices and made despotic governors of every town and village have given themselves over to such barefaced graft, injustice, oppression amounting in many places to terrorism and robbery, that we are all quite disgusted. This

appears to be really the sentiment of the huge majority. Lately I have not been able to find one single person, even among those ostentatiously wearing the Militia uniform, to say a good word for the system.

As to this war, I have not heard one word in favour of it but have heard innumerable young men say " Why should we go and be killed to glorify Fascism when we hope and pray that it may fall to pieces ? "

The truth is this : To glorify the system the people have been ruthlessly taxed, industry squeezed to death, and huge sums spent on show, magnificent new public buildings, splendid roads, parades, " raids " across the Atlantic, etc., etc., and the country is practically bankrupt. People " in the know " have been saying for the last year that only a victorious war can save Mussolini from falling, because a war wakes up industry, occupies the unemployed, allows all sorts of " emergency " measures also in finance, and fires the people (perhaps!) with some new spark of enthusiasm. This absolute necessity to make war and to win it quickly is the reason the Dictator is crazy with rage against the English for putting spokes in his wheels.

As to the graft and terrorism, we have close personal knowledge of it all. As to Mussolini himself, we consider that success has at last gone completely to his head, and that although he is still a genius, he has become a megalomaniac, ready to kill thousands for his own personal glory. Nearly the whole army is bitterly against the " Party " although they are all obliged to belong to it, and they simply hate the Militia with which they are forced to work.

This letter speaks for itself. For obvious reasons no further particulars about the writer can be published, and for the same reason I must sign myself with a pseudonym. LONDON LAWYER

NO ADMITTANCE

SIR,—May I seek the hospitality of your columns in a matter which I think would interest the public in Great Britain—or at least the fair-minded section of the public ?

I was imprisoned in India in January, 1932, without any trial under the provisions of the " rusty " Regulation No. III of 1818, and I was in custody till February 23, 1933. During this period I was never informed by the Government as to why I had been incarcerated, though I repeatedly asked for that information. When my health was thoroughly ruined and when Medical Officers of the Government and Medical Boards appointed by the Government had repeatedly recommended that I should be permitted to go to Europe for treatment, I was allowed to do so. But up till now I have no idea as to why I was imprisoned.

A few days ago I was visited by some friends from England who informed me that there had been a propaganda against me there to the effect that I was connected with the terrorist movement in India. The powers enjoyed by the Bengal Government for dealing with terrorists and their sympathisers are so wide and far-reaching that if there had been the slightest basis for such an accusation, I am sure that the Bengal Government would have dealt with me in a court of law long ago, particularly because I had repeatedly asked that I should be sent up for trial or set at liberty. My own attitude to the problem of terrorism has been clearly explained in my book, *The Indian Struggle* (Wishart). I now ask you, Sir, if it is fair to give a man a bad name, when you refuse to prosecute him in spite of your having the widest powers imaginable for securing a conviction and when you refuse to inform him even privately as to why he has been deprived of his liberty.

The injustice and the unfairness of the whole affair is accentuated by the fact that I am not permitted to come to England to vindicate myself. On the eve of my departure for Europe in February, 1933, when I was given my passport, I was surprised to find that an entry had been made to the effect that I would not be allowed to enter the United Kingdom and Germany. Simultaneously I was informed by the Government of India that if I desired an extension of passport facilities, I should apply to the Secretary of State for India when I was in Europe. After I came to Europe, in 1933, I applied to the Secretary of State for India for permission to visit the United Kingdom and Germany, but I was given permission to visit Germany only. The position, therefore, is that though I am a British subject and a graduate of Cambridge—I can visit other countries in Europe but not Great Britain.

A similar injustice is involved in the banning of my book, *The Indian Struggle*, in India, though it has been published by a British publisher and is allowed to circulate in Great Britain. Is English law to have one interpretation in Great Britain and another in India ?

Between 1921 and 1931 I have taken an important part in the activities of the Indian National Congress, but all my activities have been open and above board. During this period I have held important positions as General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, President All-India Trade Union Congress and Mayor of Calcutta. And even to-day I am the President of the Bengal Congress Committee. In the restrictions on my liberty, the only consolation I have is that there are more than 2,500 people in Bengal, including some women, who have also been deprived of their liberty without any trial. (I am taking the figures from the *Times* of August 2nd, 1935).

I believe that there are people in England—however small their number may be—who stand for justice and fair play. I would like to draw their attention to the above matter through the medium of your esteemed journal.

Kurhaus Königin Alexandra, Karlsbad. SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

THE CLAIMS OF SCIENCE

SIR,—I am sorry that the reference in my article, to the inheritance of characters determined by genes, should have been read by Professor Haldane as an aspersion on the effectiveness of selection under controlled conditions. It would be indeed foolish to disregard the volume of meticulous work which has established the facts on which the theory of the inheritance of unit characters is based. My contention is (and there is nothing remarkable in anything so self-evident) that though the segregation of genes may be foretold with great accuracy in selected instances, the application of a theory based on necessarily limited fields of observation, breaks down and cannot be applied to many other cases, such as those described in my articles. There are numerous organisms, the problem of whose origin and mode of life remains beyond and outside any theory of purely mechanistic development, and which, even in the opinion of the most conservative biologists " unfortunately contradict the accepted theories of evolution."

E. L. GRANT WATSON

NUDISM

SIR,—Since " Critic," in your issue of August 24th, appears to approve of people carrying on their ordinary holiday amusements without clothes, it is difficult to understand why he should find nothing but a subject for laughter in organised nudity. The physiological and psychological benefits of sun and air bathing are too well known to burden your space with an account of them. In the present state of public opinion only a privileged minority can enjoy them whether on holidays or not. The object of nudist groups is to provide facilities for those not fortunate enough to possess secluded gardens or to take their holidays in remote districts. By this means it is hoped to educate the conventionally minded so that in time nudity in the sun and air will be available for the ordinary man and woman. When that object has been achieved the necessity for nudist groups will be gone. If nudists sometimes read poetry and play round games, it is because these activities are included in the holiday pursuits of many people. ALEC CRAIG

33 Ulysses Road, London, N.W.6.

GERMAN JUSTICE

SIR,—The daily budget of German news tends by its sheer volume of horror to obscure individual atrocities. May I therefore draw your readers' attention to the sentence of death recently passed by the First Senate of the People's Court in Berlin upon the ex-Deputy Albert Kayser for participation in illegal activities ? Those who have followed the German revolutionary movement will be aware of the high character and idealism of this distinguished Trade Union official. It is feared that this sentence, so barbarous in itself, is merely the prelude to the trial of Thälmann, and that the Hitler Government is watching its reception abroad in order to judge whether the time is ripe for the legal murder of the latter. I venture to hope that your readers will feel inclined to write letters of protest against Herr Kayser's execution to the President of the First Senate of the People's Court. It is important for the German Government to realise that its acts of individual terrorism do not escape notice abroad. HAROLD J. LASKI

Devon Lodge, Addison Bridge Place, London, W.14.

A CORRECTION

Referring in our last week's issue to the generous gift of 150 acres of Sussex downs to the National Trust, we erroneously named Lady Noel-Buxton as the donor. The gift was made by Countess Buxton in memory of the late Earl Buxton.

Miscellany

BEARDS IN AMERICA

RECENTLY the American press has been engaged in a shuddering speculation as to the likelihood of beards returning, now that feminine fashion tends to turn the hands of the clock slightly backwards. Speaking as one with authority—or at least, with a beard—I feel impelled to set down a few observations on this subject which arouses such curious emotions in that ubiquitously clean-shaven country. Few Americans have ever pondered upon the reasons why their pink and "hot-towelled" countenances:

Glistening like the cheeks of G. K. Chesterton

as Ezra Pound once expressed it in an immortal line, present so uniform and multitudinous a tribute to the razor. In other countries, varieties of tonsorial experience, as William James might have said, are visible in any miscellaneous gathering of men. Some are clean-shaven, some have moustaches, others beards or sidewhiskers. In fact, it was the astounding spectacle of this national cult of cold razor steel in America which drove me, after my first three months there, to obscure my features in the manner of Henri IV.

At that time I had not heard of the martyrdom of Joseph Palmer of Leominster, Massachusetts, upon whose tomb there is a life-size carving of his head, with its wonderful beard, accompanied by this sinister inscription: "Persecuted for Wearing the Beard." Gradually the true significance of Julian the Apostate's "Misopogon, or the Enemy of the Beard" began to dawn upon me. Gibbon, the historian, regarded that work as a "singular monument of the resentment, the wit, the humanity, and the indiscretion" of this bearded vegetarian who said, "I neither like to give nor receive kisses." Gibbon, as befitted an eighteenth century gentleman, used the razor, but I suddenly realised that as early as 362 A.D., the man who wore a beard was on the defensive.

Whether the hand that rocks the American cradle—or intends to do so—also wields the American razor, I can only guess. Do men shave to please women, or do women like them because they shave? Which is cause, which is effect? My observation is that pogonophobia is a force with which men must reckon in America. Since there all aesthetic values are determined by women, the bearded man will excessively complicate, if not completely eliminate, all but the most formal relations with that crowning glory of the New World, the American Woman. I once heard an ornament of her sex declare that it must be horrible to awake in the morning and find a bearded cheek beside one on the pillow. From this I concluded that American men must get up at 4.30 a.m. and shave. Or can it be that unshaven bristles are more soothing than hair? Remembering my own condition in my unregenerate days of unbeardedness, I find this incredible. All I can say is: How use doth breed habit in the woman.

There is no doubt that beards have from time immemorial exercised a distracting influence upon the human race and led to strange excesses of fear and superstition, the pendulum swinging constantly from one extreme to the other. A general roster of the outstanding men of the world, from Homer to the present time, will reveal a surprising majority of beards. The Greeks and the Romans had bearded and shaven periods in their history. The Elizabethans were bearded, and the Jamestown settlement in Virginia was made by such men. When Moscow was burning—as was the White House, in the final war between England and the United States—naval officers wore sidewhiskers, but there was a hiatus until the Victorian era before the beard bloomed once more. To this day there is an obvious division of opinion on the subject in England. Army officers are encouraged to wear moustaches, but sailors must be either clean-shaven or full-bearded.

It is often supposed that such fashions are determined by royalty. Such cases have been known in the past, as when Victoria decreed the shaving of the bluejacket's upper lip; but neither Edward VII nor George V has affected the free-born Briton's right to decide for himself. Some do and some do not wear beards. Yet, I am credibly informed that it was H.R.H. the Prince of Wales who made plus-fours and grey felt hats popular. On behalf of the fraternity I am proud that we non-shavers exercise the right of self-determination and are not swayed by the dictates of mere fashion, however lofty those dictates. Only the man who has gone through the social ordeal of dining out while in the process of cultivating a beard can know what ruthless self-immolation to a higher purpose, what a complete surrender of all pride, is required. Many, by the way, evade the issue and take flight, adopting the lesser part of valour by growing their beards in the wilderness, thus presenting their friends only with a *fait accompli*.

Perhaps the wildest notion to which the wearing of beards has ever given rise must be credited to no less an expert in human nature than Aldous Huxley. In *Antic Hay*, it will be remembered, he professes to show how Gumbril, by the simple expedient of purchasing a false fan-shaped beard, transforms himself into a combination of Don Juan and Rabelais. O beard, what errors are committed in thy name! Don Juan and Rabelais? Walt Whitman and George Bernard Shaw, perhaps? Karl Marx and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow?

Joseph Pennell once said to me: "In the days when men were not all clean-shaven they looked different from one another. Now they all look alike." In the stress and exigencies of modern life this may be all to the good; it may explain female pogonophobia. Discretion is the better part of being bearded—one is so easily identifiable. A bearded man in America enjoys all the privileges of a bearded woman in a circus.

ERNEST BOYD

A SLEEPING GIANT

(Scene: a workers' tenement-house; a strike to mark the anniversary of insurrection)

AT seven o'clock we saw the giant mourn:
Lights die, hundreds of living windows die,
Darkness, like hate or scorn, overflow.
Breathing inside were mothers, boys remembering
A year ago, the shudder of the guns,
Their freedom-fighters staining red the snow.
In the station-wall's shadow the police were gathered,
Nervously murmured, waiting.

Do they think, the victorious,
Because to-night this hate is silent
Because no rifles crack from lightless windows,
Because the traffic is blocked for their parades,
And the cardinal, touring an aeroplane factory,
Mouths blessings unmolested,
That these will soon forget?
Because their papers echo their own hands clapping
That these are clapping too?

For these, in darkness, who so proudly
Watched their own city rise among their masters',
The epic lives, fire smouldering in coal:
Memory will not give up
Days and nights together against ruin
While the air was pouring fire and lies,
Nor the message of defiance from the gas-works,
Nor the maimed leader hanged, his pride;
Strewn leaflets will quicken it, and sudden singing,
Thin papers passed from hand to hand,
But mostly empty bellies, torn clothes, the not-seen faces.

This memory is a sleeping giant,
Waking to mourn in silent bitterness,
Yet waking also, when the whip, when the hour comes
To shatter these bars of terror, and stride to freedom.

JOHN LEHMANN

AT THE PROMENADES

THE first three weeks of the "Proms" have passed uneventfully. The performances are kept on a good level with occasional lapses which are chiefly to be found on the Bach and the Mozart-Haydn nights. Bach, Mozart and Haydn are not suited to Sir Henry Wood's forceful and vitalising style, their music has too much life in it already and this needs to be discerned and made audible by an extraordinary sense of musical values which in truth we do not often meet with in any conductor the world over. This is so generally admitted that I once heard Bruno Walter say that he hadn't yet conducted a performance of Mozart's G Minor Symphony to his satisfaction, and I see that the *Times* correspondent at Salzburg, after writing enthusiastically of Toscanini's performance of *Falstaff*, has just given an account of his disappointment with Toscanini's performance of the G Minor Symphony at his first orchestral concert there. The *tempi* were too quick and the phrasing consequently ruined. Complaints of Toscanini's *tempi* on the score of their being generally too fast are always being made but not always with good reason. Toscanini takes the *allegretto* of Beethoven's A Major Symphony slightly faster than other conductors, but it is all right. On the other hand he takes the Funeral March of the *Eroica* slower than is customary, but it is better so and absolutely convincing. Nor do fast *tempi* necessarily ruin phrasing; it depends upon the essential justness of the tempo chosen and also upon the capacity of the players. Even beyond this it must be remembered that when we come to musicians like Toscanini and orchestras of the calibre of the Vienna Philharmonic, they are striving beyond a fixed standard of excellence into a region where what they aim at sometimes comes off and sometimes doesn't. And no doubt even Toscanini has his lapses, and it is hardly surprising that if it did occur a lapse should take place in the rendering of the G Minor Symphony. I should like to know if any musician has ever heard the first movement perfectly played. I am inclined to think that it defies materialisation. Liszt once boasted that he could reproduce all the essentials of any orchestral score upon the pianoforte, but Mendelssohn said "I shall believe him when I hear him reproduce the first movement of the G Minor Symphony." Personally I should like to hear one day some pianist play Liszt's arrangement of the *Symphonie Fantastique*. It seems to me that there are things in this not easy to convert to the pianoforte, but, of course nothing so utterly impossible as the opening theme of the G Minor symphony with its strange oscillation to left and right and its completely soaring quality so light and yet so enigmatic.

So far the Promenades have brought us only two novelties—I am writing before the performance of Mr. Alan Bush's *Dance Overture* on August 30th—and both are by English composers. This young English composer who is taken up by the B.B.C. is a fortunate young man. Firstly the B.B.C. itself, and quite rightly, treats him as a master, and secondly our press in its eagerness to find English composers gives his work the warmest of welcomes. So, when Mr. Eric Fogg's Fantasy Overture *September Night* was performed on August 17th, Mr. Fogg was able to read about himself in the B.B.C. programme note:

> Making a name for himself first as one of the daring innovators in British music he has shown in later works that he can achieve his effects by quite simple means without losing anything in the process. There is nothing to startle even old-fashioned hearers in this Fantasy Overture, modern though it is in its use of the orchestra and its freedom from formality.

Daring innovators who have shown later that they can achieve all their effects by quite simple means are legion. The fact is that they are not daring innovators. Mr. Eric Fogg may be, in spite of what the commentator writes, but personally I have never heard one of his daring innovations and I agree that *September Night* is not one. Apart from suffering from a redundance of the not very striking principal theme, I could hear nothing in *September Night* that called for particular comment; the effects as well as the means were simple.

The recent new work was a *Passacaglia on a well-known-theme* by Gordon Jacob. This is what the B.B.C. commentator had to say in the programme about Mr. Gordon Jacob.

"His own music in most of the traditional forms both large and small has for some years marked him as one of the most brilliant and original of present-day composers, and much of it has already taken a place of its own in the affections of listeners."

I wonder what Mr. Gordon Jacob thinks of his being described as "one of the most brilliant and original of present-day composers"! I think it is doing him an injustice. He has a reputation for being a very ingenious and skilful scorer and such music of his as I have heard supports that reputation. I should think he might be a most excellent teacher of composition, but "one of the most brilliant and original of present-day composers"!—well, it is possible that the writer is referring only to English composers, although he does not say so. I don't think Mr. Gordon Jacob himself would claim that he is as original as Schönberg, as Stravinsky, as Alban Berg, or as brilliant as Richard Strauss, but even among English musicians there are some who might be judged to surpass Mr. Jacob in originality and brilliance. As for the present composition, it is a clever, clear-headed piece of work such as one would expect from Mr. Jacob, but its chief originality, as far as I could perceive it, was its use of the theme of "Oranges and Lemons"—a theme whose very untouchability may have attracted the craftsman in Mr. Jacob—a natural and praiseworthy thing in itself!

I don't suppose these superlatives which the B.B.C. lavishes upon its young men do them any harm. It may even be that nobody reads them but me, but there is always the danger, with institutions, that they tend to become small self-admiration circles cut off from the vital artistic life of the time. It strikes me as a little odd that in all the many times I have been to musical events of exceptional quality I rarely see present any of the obvious leaders of our musical life, famous heads or professors of schools or colleges of music. Professor Dent is certainly an exception. You will find him everywhere in Europe and England when there is anything noteworthy to be heard, but what will our distinguished musicians of the next generation do if in their youth they are proclaimed by such powerful institutions as the B.B.C. as so great? Will they remain receptive to outside influences? Or when in their turn they become heads of schools and colleges of music will they have reached by then a self-satisfied isolation in which they will assume that they have nothing to learn from anyone outside the narrow hierarchy of official English music? But perhaps nothing can be done to prevent this tendency. It is in the very nature of institutions to become narrow and cramping influences; on the other hand they provide as such a target for the freer forces and perhaps as a target for criticism they do something to rally the more enterprising and individual young people of talent.

W. J. TURNER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Full House," Haymarket

In the country of the sous-Cowards, Ivor Novello is king. And in his own admiring circle his method of repeating stock characters to suit a particular actor or actress no doubt brings him a harvest of grateful eulogy from those lucky enough to gather under his red roof. But each successive play by this very lack of invention grows shoddier, while if we are to judge the measure of his intelligence by the dialogue of his latest effort, the face that haunts a thousand housemaids has little behind its proscenium. In a play as light as this, only the most brilliant of humour could possibly carry the thinness of the plot. But Mr. Novello's tinsel-shod arrows bear shafts which at times verge on something witty, at others plunge into a type of lavatory humour, which surely in these days cannot bring the sense of naughtiness to the suburbs. It is, at all events, very much out of keeping with the tradition and dignity of the Haymarket Theatre. Miss Lilian Braithwaite, as the proprietress of the gambling house from which the play takes its name, struggles hard with a too vapid part,

more suited to Miss Zena Dare, and goes down with flying colours in a crescendo of hideous dresses. The acting honours go to Miss Isabel Jeans, who, looking lovely in her magnolia-like way, triumphs by sheer virtuosity over the incredible hypochondriac-cum-vamp she is made to play, but her lines and situations bring a blush or perhaps, as we are in the poker world, we should say a flush to the cheek. Poor Miss Heather Thatcher, masquerading as a hunting ingénue, does her best, but her imitation of a goldfish is on a much higher plane than this. One turns with relief to Mr. Hubert Harben, who as Miss Braithwaite's beau redivivus, has a nice, quiet, straightforward part, and Mr. Robert Andrews, who, disguising himself by substituting a lawyer's portfolio for the *Tatler*, struts his drawing-room stuff with his usual charm. If this play runs it will be mainly due to Miss Jeans' gallant effort, for while as an entertainment it has its moments, as a play it is not worth, to use another poker phrase, a "spit in the ocean."

"The Crusades" at the Carlton

Behind the gauze curtain with the spotlit flaming cross on it, twenty-five chaps in armour knelt or blew bugles while a travesty of Peter the Hermit exhorted them to wage the third crusade. He roared that it was "the will of God!"—but *Paramount Picture* on the screen behind him gave that the lie direct. Thus the Carlton backs up its own poster crusade and "prepares" De Mille's boy-scout public for his latest and most lavish spectacle. Still, this is a film which has to be seen, if seeing is believing. An impressive object-lesson in the art of unprincipled and profitable waste. So epic, so *kolossal* that it only has room for two dramatic moments: Saladin's rejoinder to the assembled Christian kings, and the head-on collision of the infidel and English hosts. Apart from these salient excitements, the action creeps from one minor climax to the next without getting anywhere at all except along the tangled heart-lines of Loretta Young (Berengaria) and Richard Coeur-de-Lion. Sex and mediaeval warfare alternate regularly (a sentimental lull, a clamour of sound), both indescribably false; but the history is merely freak, the maudlin modern love-affair is the worst anachronism. Miss Young has always struck us as highly improbable in every film we've seen of hers since *Zoo in Budapest*. She is 5ft. 3in. tall, weighs 105 lb. and has very healthy looking American teeth. The mincing, starry-eyed silliness of her Berengaria is hard to describe; perhaps because she could not improve on what De Mille wanted. Henry Wilcoxon, on the other hand, gave a spirited performance as Richard Lion-heart; he lent the hearty inanity of his lines a pleasing sincerity and gusto. This can't have been easy, as the dialogue was futile, its low-water mark being reached in a conversation between villains playing chess, in which every move was a check, every remark a melodramatic innuendo.

"Women Wanted" at the Empire

Wardour Street may not know, or need to know, that one *Guardsman* is worth six *Crusades*, but it is still difficult to guess who in all its far-flung outposts prefers such spectacles to a *Trunk Murder*, a *Thin Man* or even a *Woman Wanted*. At the risk of being monotonous, it should be permissible to hint once again that *Woman Wanted* is the sort of film nine people out of ten in London—and we suspect in the mysterious "provinces" also—want to see. And this in spite of the fact that neither this particular gangster drama nor its supporting comedy, *Calm Yourself*, was as good as other M.G.M. pictures that have been shown at the Empire recently. It would be surprising if they were, perhaps. Slick entertainment has been plentiful already this year, and of late almost every film at the Empire has been up to the high commercial standard that Hollywood has set itself for articles of this sort. Both these talkies were directed by George Seitz; they could have been better directed, more cunningly cut and rather wittier than they were. But, as it was, they were easy to sit through; they were entertaining. The audience liked them because they had many of the merits of their type: excitement, an engaging freshness, enough surprise—and sufficient likelihood, to knock the padding out of a dozen "monster productions."

THE COMING WEEK

THURSDAY, August 29th—
"Dood Water," Academy Cinema.
SUNDAY, September 1st—
Three Choirs Festival, Worcester.
MONDAY, September 2nd—
"The Constant Nymph," Everyman Cinema, Hampstead.
TUESDAY, September 3rd—
Flower Show, National Dahlia Society, New Horticultural Hall.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

HOLIDAYS are of many sorts, and the busman's variety is always popular with virtuous elderly people who lead wise and happy lives at home. I have been reading of such a one in Mr. C. W. Berry's *In Search of Wine* (Constable, 7*s.* 6*d.*), which describes an eight weeks' tour of the vineyards of France. Mr. Berry is a partner in one of the most famous firms of wine merchants in London, and was given the exceptional welcome he deserved all through the districts in which he travelled. During one notable day in the Charente district, he records his verdicts, passed on twelve specimens of notable brandy between breakfast and luncheon, as well as sampling "a few more or less ordinary cognacs"; he took brandy after lunch as a matter of course, sampled ten brandies of vintages 1858, 1870, 1874 and 1878 during the afternoon and took "a fine champagne 2nd Empire" after dinner. Five varieties of wine helped out the day. . . . Read a page or two of Mr. Berry's book, half shut your eyes, and you will see the vineyards clothing the hillsides, smell the white chalky dust rising and covering everything, feel the pot-holes in the long straight roads from which the magpies fly away at right angles at your car's rattling approach. Mr. Berry's first travelling companion and chauffeur was a Campbell; the magpie is the bird of the Campbells and he records every magpie he saw as though he had an Irishman's superstition. The French methods of augury differ from the Gaelic. I have always been told:

> One for sorrow, two for mirth
> Three for a marriage, four for a birth.

The account of a gastronomic tour, in the most civilised country in Europe, reads very strangely when one is living like a tinker in a tent. Mr. Berry is not likely to have come this way. Except for religious purposes, the use of the grape is unknown in the district of Galway where I am living, and I have not tasted wine for a month. Familiarity with the outside world penetrates slowly and arouses mixed feelings among these Western people. Thus when we gave an orange to some mountain children they bit into it like an apple and ate it whole, peel and all, while we watched them too petrified to correct their error; Ireland is not a land for the gourmet. It is the most wonderful dairy country in the world, yet there is only one Irish cheese—a highly coloured imitation Kraft, unfit for a civilised man. The peasants will not eat cheese at all. There are no vegetables except potatoes and parsnips and hardly any fruit. What should we have here to offer Mr. Berry? The bread is wonderful, made from wheat grown on the island, although it is soda-bread, the blackberries are magnificent and so are the lake trout when you can catch them. A visitor, wise in such matters, found the honey-coloured boletus, which grows under pine trees, growing on Inchagoill. Otherwise one lives on eggs and bacon, Indian tea, Guinness, or water from the lake. Potheen is talked of as a Christmas drink, but we are a long way from the still; I have not tasted it and do not believe that it would appeal to Mr. Berry. What can I offer him that he would not find in greater perfection in France?—for our great feast, the leg of a kid, suffered because I could only find a piece of wild mint to masquerade as the *bouquet d'herbes*, while a glass of white wine would have transformed it entirely. The only thing I can think of is the postman who visits us three times a week. I had been away one day and drove back hurriedly to catch him coming back, for we had no money and I was expecting a letter from the bank. "Have you a registered letter for me?" I cried out. "I had; but I left it with Mary at the farm." "That's splendid. Don't you want me to sign for it?" The postman fumbled in his bag and held out a strip of paper in triumph. "I have it signed. I insthructed Mary to sign your name. I told her to change her hand." Such considerate kindness, such readiness to break all rules for one's convenience, such sympathy which can be detected even in the relations of close neighbours, are remarkably evident among these people. They are desperately poor and "politics" are making them poorer still, but then they have not a Frenchman's love of property.

* * *

To return to Mr. Berry. *In Search of Wine* is a mine of information. Not all of it is valuable, for no detail has been thought too trifling to be recorded.

> Before arriving at *Ratte*, we had to pull up at a level crossing. After waiting some four or five minutes a P.L.M. train passed, consisting of both passenger and goods trucks.

That is quite a typical sentence. Yet if one is seriously interested in wine and food this is the book to travel with in France. Probably only a thousandth part of the good things here recorded will ever come one's way, but think how terrible it would be to pass through Vonnas and miss the *Grand Hôtel Moderne*. Here is the menu:

DINNER (22 FRCS ! ! !)

Terrine de canard à la gelée.	
Escargots bourguinonne (*exquisite—each in a separate earthenware pot*)	1928 Pouilly, very good.
Brochetons Meunière	1926 Moulin-à-vent,
Poulet à la crème	very good—rather old.
Beignets Vonnasiens	1815 Armagnac, soft
Fromage frais	and pale — really ex-
Tarte maison. Fruits	cellent.

> The chef, Monsieur Perrat, who joined us afterwards over the Armagnac in order that we could compliment him on the dinner, was an artist to his finger tips. I shall ever remember him . . . his soul-like feeling for wine was almost pathetic. I can see him now as I write this—with uplifted eyes, and hand on heart (having listened to a few remarks on the excellence of wine), softly uttering, with profound depth. . . . "Ah, oui Messieurs. . . . LE VIN QUI EST MYSTERIEUX." I have promised myself that if ever I go to these parts again, I will return to shake him by his honest hand.
>
> I took away one of the delightful little escargot pots . . . each time this catches my eye, I feel the glow of a smile of pleasure.

But even if one never goes abroad, Mr. Berry's book is invaluable—its greatest use is of course for the wine-lover. It is particularly valuable because Mr. Berry was principally concerned with the wines of recent vintage which are still procurable at modest prices. Every now and then of course he is regaled on some incredible splendour that has been preserved from the distant past—and having myself once enjoyed 1870 Ch. Lafitte, I do not grudge any of Mr. Berry's adjectives, but the practical use is in knowing the good years in recent times. Thus 1933 will be a really good claret. 1928 is excellent and 1926 is not bad. Of the Burgundies 1933 will be good, 1928 is fine and 1926 very good. Mr. Berry did not limit himself of course to Burgundy and Bordeaux; he has most interesting accounts of the Jura wines, of Beaujolais, and of the Pyrenean district where Roussillon comes from.

At the beginning of his book, Mr. Berry explains that he found some difficulty in finding suitable travelling companions to act as his chauffeur. If it ever gets about that he is undertaking another tour of this description, I should think St. James's Street will be blocked by eager volunteers. *In Search of Wine* is not well written, there is no sign of critical selection in it—everything is put down pell-mell with a Dumas-like gusto, and for that reason, the author has, perhaps unconsciously, drawn an admirable portrait of himself. To convey what this is like is impossible shortly, for the originality of the writer is in his prolixity and liveliness, rather than in his opinions. There are boring pages as well as entertaining ones, but before one puts the book on the shelf for reference one will find oneself trying to parody Edward Lear's self-portrait.

> How pleasant to know Mr. Berry
> Who has tasted such oceans of drink.

It would indeed be pleasant, and pleasant to taste wine of any sort again and to drive round France, but the lake and the islands, the turf smoke and soda bread, fuchsia hedges and fruitless fishing, have had their points. DAVID GARNETT

TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

The Odyssey of Homer. Translated by T. E. SHAW (Colonel T. E. Lawrence). *Oxford University Press.* 10s. 6d.

Lawrence's translation of the *Odyssey* was published first in New York, and reviewed at length by Mr. C. M. Bowra in these columns at the time. In calling attention to the English edition, admirably designed and printed by the Oxford Press, there is no need for me to repeat what was said then. The great merit of his translation, as I think Mr. Bowra pointed out, is the poetry he discovers everywhere in Homer's detail, in the descriptions of carpentry, arms, vineyards, fishing—a beauty which has escaped previous translators. Lawrence is the awkward master of a fine prose. Despite flaws of style and the occasional jar of colloquialism with simplicity, his narrative gives us a more continuous sense of Homer's world than we should otherwise get outside the original. We may feel that prose is incapable of conveying the full effect, but at least it avoids the incongruities of English metre.

Homer is a much-visited continent. At different times the *Odyssey*—not to mention the *Iliad*—has been translated into blank verse, heroic couplets, heptameters, a variety of ballad metres, Spenserian stanzas, Omar Khayyám quatrains; and for those who like to push curiosity further there is a version in Esperanto hexameters. From all these attempts (they make an interesting study) we get a queer picture of Homer and a good idea of the difficulties of translating him. No single executant emerges as *the* English translator of Homer: Chapman may be allowed some of the barbaric splendour which appealed to Keats and Lamb, but even if we accept an Elizabethan Ulysses and the distortions of sense and movement produced by the couplet, the verse itself after a while goes off into a cantering dullness. The rest are for the most part either poetic substitutes (Pope and William Morris) or freaks of scholarship. The difficulty is to find not only a metre but a manner. Blank verse would appear to be the natural medium in English, but it must be an Homeric blank verse, not like Cowper's Miltonic or William Morris's Pre-Raphaelite, and the more we think about this solution the more inaccessible, I think, it will become. Few translators of Homer have escaped being obsessed by their hobby, which attracts equally the poet, the scholar and the crank. We must appreciate the vastness of the undertaking and a certain crankiness in human nature if the subject is to attract us, if we are to enjoy, for example, at the end of Matthew Arnold's admirably argued essay, the culmination of those ghastly hexameters. Imagine a whole *Odyssey* in "English hexameters"! It is not impossible, and some day perhaps we shall have the poem, full of unconscious echoes of "The Bothie."

> Hewson and Hobbes were down at the matutine bathing; of course too
> Arthur Audley, the bather par excellence, Glory of Headers,
> Arthur they called him for love and for euphony; so were they bathing,
> There where in mornings was custom, where over a ledge of granite
> Into a granite basin descended the amber torrent.
> There were they bathing and dressing; it was but a step from the cottage.

The translators who have come off best have usually been those who had scant respect for the original; at least they have produced a Homer not unlike themselves.

Against the crazier falls of the purists one might set the jaunty approach of Pope or Samuel Butler. Useless to apply to them Arnold's requirement of a style direct, swift and noble: neither possesses these qualities, and Butler writes in familiar prose. His translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and that odd piece of psychologising and research, *The Authoress of the Odyssey*, are solemn jokes of the sort in which he excelled. He was, of course, on this occasion quite serious, and not, as when he wrote *The Fair Haven* (a mock defence of the miraculous element in Christianity), avowedly pulling the reader's leg; but compare *The Authoress of the Odyssey* and *The Fair Haven*—they are on exactly the same level of seriousness; and Butler translating Homer was the same as Butler composing oratorios after Handel or sonnets after Shakespeare. His level of seriousness was *argument*—and he plunged into the question of Homer bristling with arguments. He thought of a poser: Could the *Odyssey* have been written by a woman? and proceeded to show that it could; further, he identified the authoress as Nausicaa, and placed the scenes of the story round Trapani in Sicily. The last point, so far as I know, has never been refuted, and Butler may conceivably be right; but to anyone who has read the *Odyssey* the attribution of authorship is inherently fantastic (it converted Mr. Bernard Shaw at a Fabian meeting, by the way). Yet the book is extraordinarily interesting and it does in queer ways throw a good deal of light on the essential nature of the *Odyssey* as a work of art. Butler possessed an almost first-rate intelligence and the play of that intelligence is worth having. Perhaps the chief value of his book, apart from this charm, is its illumination of the many feminine qualities in the *Odyssey*, beside which the *Iliad* seems exclusively masculine.

He gives a delightfully fanciful picture of his authoress. "The poem is such a *tour de force* as none but a high-spirited, headstrong girl who was used to having her own way would have attempted, much less carried to such a brilliantly successful conclusion." He adduces proof from various incidents in the story. Who but a young girl would have been likely to "conceive the idea of making Helen walk round the wooden horse, pat it, call out the names of the heroes who were inside, and mimic the voices of their wives"? (iv. 274–279). In the person of Nausicaa she keeps her father up to wearing a clean shirt for an occasion (vi. 30–33). She finds the smell of fish intolerable, and (iv. 441–446) relieves Menelaus and his companions, when they are disguised as seals, by sending the goddess Idothea to hold ambrosia under their nostrils. She sets the rudder of a ship in its bows (ix. 483), and makes Polyphemus milk his ewes before putting their lambs with them (ix. 245).

> As for the Cyclops incident, delightful as it is, it is impossible to conceive as a man's or matron's writing. It was very kind of Polyphemus, drunk though he was, to stay without moving a muscle till Ulysses and his men had quite finished boring out his eye with a burning beam that was big enough for a ship's mast, but Baron Munchausen is the only male writer who could offer us anything of this kind, and his is not the case in point.

In short, he decides that his authoress was young, self-willed and unmarried; and adds that she was probably also short and plain. It is amusing to compare this view with the imaginary portrait given by T. E. Lawrence in his preface:

> In four years of living with this novel I have tried to deduce the author from his self-betrayal in the work. I found a book-worm, no longer young, living from home, a mainlander, city-bred and domestic. Married but not exclusively, a dog-lover, often hungry and thirsty, dark-haired. Fond of poetry, a great if uncritical reader of the *Iliad*, with limited sensuous range but an exact eyesight which gave him all his pictures. A lover of old bric-à-brac, though as muddled an antiquary as Sir Walter Scott. . . .

Where Butler sees throughout the book an intimate knowledge of women and a jealousy for the honour of their sex, Lawrence finds only "an infuriating male condescension." The two differ at almost every point (no doubt Lawrence had read Butler), and their translations extend the same contrast. Butler's is rough, homely, teasing, matter-of-fact; Lawrence's reserved, exact with a craftsman's care, and despite his description of the poem as "the first novel of Europe," poetic.

Curiously enough, in his introduction Lawrence badly undervalues the poetry of the *Odyssey*. He may be right in describing the latter Homer as a writer who "lived too long after the heroic age to feel assured and large," though that is not quite the impression which the poem leaves with most readers; but the comparison with William Morris, also "driven by his age to legend," is absurd—more absurd than any of Samuel Butler's assumptions. He allows the author of the *Odyssey* "more verbal felicity than Morris's" but "less poetry"—an acknowledgment no doubt

of the tradition that Homer's translators should have a streak of oddity. Not the poetry, he argues, but the story, is the thing; and goes on to show that the story is badly managed, the characterisation thin, and that "the author misses his every chance of greatness." Luckily this sort of paradox is not carried into the text. There can be no doubt that Lawrence has produced much the best prose version of the *Odyssey* that we have, though at times I missed Butler's plainness and the humour of his conversations.

G. W. STONIER

EMPERORS AND EMPRESSES

The Roman Empresses. By JACQUES BOERGAS DE SERVIEZ. *Putnam.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

To the Roman Emperors, historians have done less than justice. Their administrative abilities—and they were many of them extremely capable administrators—have been passed over; their early promise—they many of them began well—has been stressed only for the purposes of an invidious comparison with their debauched and sanguinary middle age; their vices have been exaggerated—with the result that the potentates of whom we read are usually monsters in human shape rather than human beings succumbing to a monstrous position, and, as students of human nature, we are robbed of the material for an exceedingly interesting psychological study. There is, after all, something of the Roman Emperor in not a few modern rich men who will never find a Suetonius, never witness the execution of a slave or ransack a whole province to furnish their tables. Yet the Neronic touch often appears beneath the surface. We recognise the same restlessness, the same balance of prodigality and economy—the possessor of a brand new Rolls-Royce may demur as to the necessity of turning on the central heating—the same desire to be loved and valued for themselves. Blessed is the pound note that a millionaire succeeds in earning by his own unaided efforts! And was it not said of Nero that the one thousand eight hundred crowns he brought home from his sporting and musical expedition through Achaia gave him deeper satisfaction "than if he had gained as many victories over the greatest enemies of the republic"?

Yes, the Roman Emperors were merely extreme examples of a type that flourishes, almost unnoticed, certainly uncondemned, in the walks of the modern everyday world. We have our monarchs of newsprint, our czars of advertising, our international armament kings; but though the large-scale operations of these potentates may not be to the public good—though the ramifications of their enterprises leave the most ambitious dreams of a Nero or a Caligula far behind—they are hampered by the very complexity of modern life. The Caesars were reared in a richer soil; the conditions in which they achieved maturity were more propitious to the development of individual mania. Seldom did they come to the Empire through direct inheritance. A large number were huddled into power at the last moment, helpless and unprepared, at the caprice of the turbulent Praetorian Guards. Few indeed stood the shock of their elevation. Transplanted to the hot-house atmosphere of the Imperial Palace, the staidest plant would burgeon out into the wildest blooms.

They may have begun life studious and well-meaning; but it is just at the point where an intelligent, though somewhat bewildered, young man crosses the line that divides extravagance from downright megalomania, that Suetonius and other chroniclers take up the tale. Recently, in *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God*, we have had an uncommonly skilful reconstruction of the background of a Roman Emperor's career; and Mr. Robert Graves has now written a persuasive and amusing introduction to Jacques Boergas de Serviez' lives of *The Roman Empresses*, an erudite volume of Imperial anecdotes compiled as long ago as 1728.

Considered as an historical portrait gallery, Serviez' list of Empresses—which ranges from Calpurnia, wife of Julius Caesar, to Constantia, sister of the Emperor Constantine, and takes in various Imperial concubines, who neither received nor deserved the title of *Augusta*, on the way—makes an odd and heterogeneous collection; and Mr. Graves is hard put to it to find any unifying principle that may be said to run through their lives. He maintains, however, that the Empresses, as a class, provided a useful counterweight to the erratic and megalomaniac behaviour of their husbands, sons and grandsons. Together with "the discipline and professional conscience of the legionary soldier on the frontier," it was "the conservatism and common sense of the Empresses," Mr. Graves suggests, that kept the vast and unwieldy Empire from falling to pieces. . . . Certainly, this book affords us a glimpse of many determined and uncommonly unscrupulous women. Here is Livia, wife of Augustus, with whom Mr. Graves has already dealt at some length in his novel; and here is Agrippina, second wife of Claudius, who poisoned her husband and was herself murdered at the instigation of her son. Among lesser known Empresses, we find Soemias and Maesa, mother and grandmother of the Emperor Heliogabalus. For Heliogabalus historians have reserved much stern moral reproof. Plainly, he started his career as a harmless invert, a good-looking young man with a nice taste in personal adornment, foreign fashions and exotic religious cults, but went mad under the strain of being snatched away from Emesa (where he enacted the rôle of high-priest of the Sun wearing a "purple habit spotted with gold" and high jewel-enriched tiara) to Rome, where he reigned as master of the civilised world. For his accession, Heliogabalus had his mother to thank; and while Heliogabalus amused himself by installing the Sun God in a Roman shrine "with strange and unheard-of ceremonies," marrying a favourite slave boy and adopting the dress and occupations of a woman, his mother attended the debates of the Senate and his grandmother "appeared in an amazon habit at the camp, reviewed the Praetorian cohorts, and had the management of everything relating to the army." Eventually, his grandmother compassed his downfall. He fled to the Praetorian camp with his mother. The assassins followed hard on his heels, discovered him near the refuse-tip, "massacred him in the arms of Soemias, who held him fast as it were to protect him, and afterwards killed her, in like manner, with their poniards."

Though one cannot recommend it as a book to be read through from beginning to end, *The Roman Empresses* provides magnificent material for a reader who enjoys skipping and will pause to select a story here and there. The author's style is ponderous yet forceful. He retails with grave relish the "horrible libertinism" that characterised so many of the Imperial ladies of whom he is writing—Julia, daughter of Augustus, whose shamelessness reached such a pitch that "she took it in her head to have placed every day on the statue of Marsyas as many crowns as she had committed crimes during the night"; Faustina, wife of that much overrated philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, who went down to the quayside and caused the sailors to pass before her naked, that she might pick out the man who pleased her best—yet he is plainly fascinated by the splendid ghosts that haunt his narrative. Since it was produced as a serious book, it seems a pity that the modern edition of *The Roman Empresses* should not be better illustrated. Many interesting Roman portrait busts are still to be found; and we might have been spared an assemblage of illustrations that would appear to have been culled from an old-fashioned *Salon* catalogue. They have as little reference to history as they have to art, and give an entirely erroneous impression of the accompanying text.

PETER QUENNELL

NEW NOVELS

The Inquisitor. By HUGH WALPOLE. *Macmillan.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
Honey in the Horn. By H. L. DAVIS. *Lovat Dickson.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
The Mountain and the Tree. By HELEN BEAUCLERK. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
A Fawn in a Field. By ROSALIND WADE. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Inquisitor is another of Mr. Walpole's novels about Polchester. It is in patches nicely cosy and satirical, as a novel about cathedral town society should be, but it is very long: the subject is diluted in much writing. Polchester stays unsubstantial, like one of those railway-poster cities—dipped in violet shadows, with spires a supernaturally placid orange, and viridian lawns—that, though you might buy a ticket, you would never arrive at. Though actually, in *The Inquisitor*, poor Polchester is anything but placid: it is disturbed by psychic rumblings from the Dead inside the cathedral and political rumblings from the unemployed in the down-town quarter. In fact, there is stage thunder, culminating in a riot and several messy deaths. A town character, Stephen Furze, a usurer, disappears; town and cathedral societies get the jitters; a cosmic uneasiness hangs over everything. The clergy here, from the bishop down, are introspective, psychic and highly articulate. The cynical Canon Ponder reads middlebrow novels . . . There is nothing Mr. Walpole does not know about self-dramatisation and a particular kind of queasiness: his masculine characters are a prey to both. The two young women, Penny and Elizabeth, are nobler.

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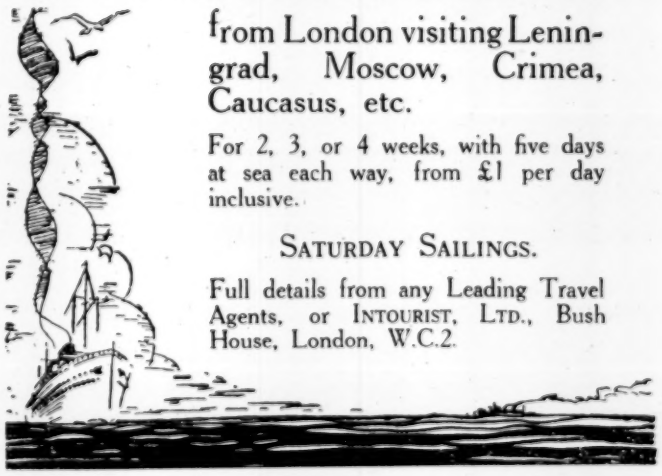

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This novel, so far as I can see, aims at being at once a thriller and a spiritual experience. As the former it much more nearly comes off. Mr. Walpole uses the traditional and honourable machinery for working up excitement: the "he little knew" manner, and "the first of a sequence of events which. . . ." These hints of worse to come encourage one through. Of its second aspect, or aim, I can only say that the word "beauty" circulates with a rapidity that makes one shy: one cannot explain why. Also, ominousness and ambiguity are overworked. On p. 297 Mr. Walpole describes a garden as "darkling" and this seems to me the adjective for the style he adopts. I say adopts, because Mr. Walpole's manner must be by now well under his own command.

Mr. Walpole commands also grimness and, sometimes, humour. His pathos is not good; it seems facile; I believe it to be synthetic. Almost every incident in this novel suffers from being written up and inflated; all would be more telling were Mr. Walpole's writing more precise and cold. . . . Mr. Walpole has standing, and should be allowed, by this time, to write how he likes; he deserves better than slighting and cynicism. But one does wish he would not keep encouraging other authors to do the wrong thing. At a literary dinner the other night he stated that it was the function of the novelist to create character. Why? This fallacy, coupled with a more recent yearning to be poetic, has sidetracked the English novel for too long. Characters in a novel are important only in what they generate (which is the stuff of the book), in their activity, and in their underlying generalness. The forbears that Mr. Walpole, admittedly, derives from occupied themselves with the particular—quirks, tricks, affectations, regrets, funny noses, lovable little ways. Is this what he means by creating character? Mrs. Proudie, Becky Sharp, Micawber generate nothing. Trollope is admirable because he was unpoetic; Thackeray was as hard as nails, Dickens was not a gentleman and did not have to regret that he did not really like Proust. Their own bouncing vitality blows their inactive characters across on hearty gusts. But Emma Bovary, Bloom, Charlus are memorable for their activity.

The publishers of *Honey in the Horn* put one off by describing the book as "pure poetry." I should like to clear Mr. H. L. Davis of this at once. *Honey in the Horn* is a nice, airy picaresque book about settlers in Oregon, 1906–1908, nearly as enjoyable as *Sard Harker*, like it but not, I think, deriving from it. There is no nonsense about this book—if it is at times sentimental, so are settlers, probably—and the writing is serviceable and good, though here again there is too much of it. Movement through Oregon country calls for camera work (it is possible that Mr. Davis is conscious of this and is visualising a *Covered Wagon* made by a Russian). It is hard luck on a novelist that pages of prose should be only a substitute for a few good shots. Mr. Davis has a feeling for big stretches of country, and for lighting (which is perhaps what his publisher means by "poetry").

> They were overtaking the settler's train at last. Below them was Looking Glass Valley, all open grassland among old orchards and caved-in houses and blackened remnants of haystacks. They could see the road clear across it and the settler's wagons making long pale-blue shadows on the grass as they wheeled out of the road to camp. . . . The wild grass of that valley had the power of reflecting light exactly like a body of water. . . . Close to the water (the Deschutes River) it was beautiful . . . the mock-orange and wild cherry flowering over the swift black water. Over it stood tall straight-up-and-down bluffs where hawks nested to catch fish in the rapids, and one with a two-foot salmon still wriggling in his claws flew so close over Clay's head that he stood up in the wagon and tried to kill it with the lash of his whip.

This wants the camera. . . . *Honey in the Horn* deserves the success it has had in America, and is to be recommended to anyone feeling townbound and stuffy.

Miss Helen Beauclerk's *The Mountain and the Tree* is not, strictly, a novel and ought not to be reviewed here. Her information on the subject of early cults, mysteries, erotic symbolism, rites, orgies and sacred misapprehensions about the facts of life is immense, and its sources are unexceptionable. From the purely fictional point of view so much learning and atmosphere rather clog the narrative. Her four stories, linked by a theme that I cannot quite discover, are spread through time, from the prehistoric Stone Age in Crete to Asia Minor in the third century A.D. Their plots are ambiguous in a high-class way, and Miss Beauclerk's artificially mystic and sing-song style had a soporific effect on me. Inevitably, and unhappily for Miss Beauclerk, the stories—especially the second and third—court comparison with *Marius* and *The Imaginary Portraits*. Beside these their style is flaccid, the emotion behind it unaustere. This book seems to me affected and pretentious, which is a pity when it must have been so much trouble to write.

Miss Rosalind Wade writes about the sorrows of her generation. She does not write well, but probably does not want to. She has a great deal to say. One of the most depressing things about the agonies of youth is that they are conventional and almost always follow the same course, which must be why middle-aged people like to read about them so much. When you are no longer young and still not middle-aged, they simply make dreary reading. Miss Wade has heaps of conviction and vitality. That *A Fawn in a Field* seems to have been written several times before is no reason why it should not be written several times again. It is a story about two young people, with mothers living in Chelsea, who have Bohemian friends, get engaged, sleep together, but finally do not marry. They are exceedingly youth-conscious.

Three of the novels on this list cost 8*s*. 6*d*. Are modern novels to be sold by the ounce? If so, my favourites would cost about 4*s*. 6*d*.

ELIZABETH BOWEN

PREJUDICES

More Strictly Personal. By SYDNEY HORLER. *Rich and Cowan*. 7*s*. 6*d*.

Jefferson and/or Mussolini. By EZRA POUND. *Stanley Nott*. 6*s*.

Mr. Horler's book is a diary, or a journal, or—to be truly exact—a *commonplace* book, in which he records anecdotes, doings, sayings, feelings and prejudices. The greater part of it is no different from any chance conversation in a pub, to the formula of "Have you heard this one?" and "Bernard Shaw, in my opinion is—." As such it will be a private consolation to lonely people who have no talent for chance conversations, for here is the voice of the ubiquitous neighbour.

Mr. Horler, indeed, is a fabulous epitome of all the Men in every Street. From not one item of propaganda has he been immune. On any occasion he may be relied upon to produce the correct standardised reaction. He is the perfect victim of Fleet Street methods.

In repose, Mr. Horler is an engaging spectacle. He rambles placidly, a hypnotised automaton mouthing his masters' precepts with boyish gusto. Here are all the anxious opiniation, the pleading cheeriness, the wooden, drugged responses of Wyndham Lewis's typical Ape. No body of principles or beliefs remains; apart from a few scattered items, corrupted by isolation into prejudices, there is nothing that Mr. Horler writes which does not conform with the pattern of a slave-morality. And it is in defence of this new morality of pleasure and anodyne that Mr. Horler's "kindly sane humour" changes to something else. He hates any standard which does not endorse his own success. He insists that a critic's only function is to echo the tastes of some millions of his fellows. He reports, in his "kindly" and "genial" way:

> Another item from my ex-Monte Carlo gossip:
> "D. H. Lawrence, diseased in mind and body, was loathed by every decent-minded person on the French Riviera."
> Which is exactly what I had imagined.

That, I think, is the authentic buzz of the bluebottle in search of carrion, the special venom of

> One of the low on whom assurance sits
> As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.

With infinite difference of quality Mr. Pound's stylistic persuasion has much in common with Mr. Horler's. There is the same voluntary alignment with a class, and the consequent parade of prejudices. The classes are different; so that, where Mr. Horler basks in his large circulation, Mr. Pound wears his rejection-slips like trophies. But Mr. Pound is equally prone to verbal bullying, vernacular abuse, and a contempt for "the other side" which precludes argument. It is, of course, better done, with idiomatic freshness and a lively vocabulary. Those who can agree with Mr. Pound about the identity of Aunt Sally will enjoy his persistent stream of wooden thunderbolts; but there is nothing in the manner to persuade the *outsider* to try three balls, even at a penny. Those who prefer provocative comment and a vivid—if one-eyed—perception, to a mess of undigested wads of

newspaper, will select Mr. Pound in preference to Mr. Horler. They will be rewarded with occasional flashes, such as :

> Literature is journalism that *stays* news.
>
> The motive or motives of an act comprise one of its dimensions.
>
> When the nucleus of the national mind hasn't the moral force to translate knowledge into action, I don't believe it matters a damn what legal forms or what administrative forms there are in a government. The nation will get the staggers.
>
> And any means are the right means which will remagnetise the will and the knowledge.

However, Mr. Pound's praise for Mussolini 1933 is likely to be vitiated for the reader by Mussolini 1935. That is a pity, since much of Mr. Pound's argument transcends Italian politics.

A. DESMOND HAWKINS

MEASURING POPULATION

The Measurement of Population Growth. By R. R. KUCZYNSKI. *Sidgwick and Jackson.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

This book is concerned, not with the causes and consequences, but with the measurement of population changes. It is incomparably the best book on the subject and is quite indispensable to any serious student of population problems. If those who do write about the causes and consequences could be compelled to read it (and such people will soon be very much more numerous when numbers begin to decline in this country) we should be spared much literature that is worse than useless because the facts of population change are so seldom properly understood. It is not too much to ask that they should read it because, although the book is devoted to a description of statistical methods, it contains no argument or method of importance which cannot be understood by anyone whose mathematics extend no further than multiplication and division. It is one of the admirable characteristics of Mr. Kuczynski's work that it is never more involved than is unavoidable, and that it is written with extraordinary lucidity ; he has none of the statistician's love of mystification. Then he is a scholar as well as a statistician in the field of population. This makes it all the more remarkable that he should be free from the irritability and cantankerousness that are so common among statisticians and not unknown among scholars. He discusses the erroneous, misleading and cumbrous methods so frequently used in a mood of gentle resignation. Finally he does not begin, as so many statisticians do, with the figures ; he looks behind them, and wonders how accurately they represent facts. It is remarkable how much laborious manipulation there has been of figures by persons who never trouble to inquire into their validity.

The measurement of fertility occupies more space in this book than does that of mortality. Mortality has been more fully studied than fertility, and the methods of measuring it are far in advance of those in use for investigating fertility. The reason is that people are much more interested in mortality than fertility ; everyone is concerned to put off the day of death as long as he can. The development of life insurance has also stimulated the measurement of the chances and causes of death. This concentration upon mortality was appropriate to the conditions which prevailed in Europe until sixty years ago and which still prevail in most countries outside the sphere of European civilisation. Under such conditions fertility remains fairly constant, and it is the increase or decrease in mortality which determines the movement of population. But within this sphere mortality has ceased to be the decisive factor in determining population growth. The chances of death, at all events before the end of the reproductive period, have been reduced to a point where further improvement must be very slow. We may be sure that every effort will be made to keep mortality at this low level and to make such progress as is possible. This means that the future course of mortality rates will be fairly steady, and that, since fertility is no longer constant, the future size of populations will be determined chiefly by the latter. Hence the enormous importance of methods of measuring fertility in order that we may watch its course and ascertain to what influences it is subject. It is here that Mr. Kuczynski has most to contribute, and the usefulness of his now well-known gross and net reproduction rates are already widely recognised.

Nevertheless, however excellent his methods, the statistician is helpless if the necessary data are not assembled, and in order to measure fertility he must know, among other things, the age of the mother at the birth of each child. Gradually nearly every civilised country has taken to recording this fact. England, however, is notorious in that she does not yet do so. It was not until July, 1926, that still-births were registered in England ; apart from including still-births, English birth data continue to be tabulated as they were in 1842 by sex and legitimacy only. This is so in spite of the fact that as early as 1852 William Farr was lamenting this omission ; he continually called attention to the matter, and in 1867 spoke of it as a " grave defect." But if the Registrar-Generals since his time had continued to press for a better system, they would surely have overcome the indifference of politicians and the public by now. The neglect to record the ages of mothers in this country now amounts to a scandal. But it is unfortunately not the only instance of the antiquated nature of our official statistics. They are still collected primarily for administrative purposes, and in consequence there are serious impediments to preparing social and economic policies, because too often there are no facts relating to important aspects of the situation which it is proposed to remedy. Politicians will soon be talking about the declining population ; there was a reference to the population situation in the Chancellor's last Budget speech. So perhaps at long last they will be obliged to provide for the collection of the material which alone will permit a proper diagnosis of the situation to be made.

A. M. CARR-SAUNDERS

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

Imagination in Early Childhood. By RUTH GRIFFITHS *Kegan Paul.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Play in Childhood. By MARGARET LOWENFELD. *Gollancz.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Speech in Childhood : Its Development and Disorders. By GEORGE SETH and DOUGLAS GUTHRIE. *Oxford University Press.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

What will it be like, a hundred years hence, to be a child ? After we had been listening to an expert on child psychology lecturing on children's difficulties and how they should be handled,

£100 TEACHING PRIZE

A prize of £100 has been offered for the best "lesson" in the form of a statement or essay of from about 1,500 to 2,000 words, explaining the guiding principles enunciated in the three books of Sir Norman Angell, "The Great Illusion," "The Unseen Assassins" and "Preface to Peace."

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The judges will be Professor Gilbert Murray, the Headmaster of Rugby, Sir Philip Gibbs and Sir Norman Angell.

Full particulars can be obtained from the publishers of the books or from;

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a friend who was with me remarked: "How I should have hated it if mother had understood me! My only refuge was that she was so blind."

Very probably her mother *was* blind: parents and all adults generally have always been blind to what goes on in children's minds. But it begins to look as if, some day, our eyes will be opened, and what will it be like to be a child then? Personally I should be inclined to risk it, but certainly, for better or for worse, childhood will be a different thing from what it has ever been before.

If the adult who was going to understand me was Dr. Ruth Griffiths I should feel quite safe. In *Imagination in Early Childhood*, Dr. Griffiths describes a series of investigations carried out on groups of children in Infants' schools in London and Brisbane whose purpose was to study what modern psychology would describe as their fantasy life. Dr. Griffiths has many excellent qualifications for the work she has undertaken. She is obviously well read in child and adult psychology, she has abundant practical experience in the handling of children and she is interested in children, not only as adults-to-be, but for their own sakes. And she has the final qualification without which none of these others would be enough to make her work successful, *she knows how to observe without interfering*. This is evident from the whole tenor of her writing. The plan she followed was this: She took three groups of children all about five years old consisting of five boys and five girls, one group composed of children of very high intelligence quotients, one of average intelligence and one of low grade. These children are named alphabetically in the order of their intelligence, thus Alfred, Amy, Bert and Bessie are all in the top group while Norman, Nellie, Owen and Olga come low down on the list. In this way the children acquire the individuality of proper names and yet, at a glance, the reader can see where they stand as regards intelligence. These children each came for interviews every few days during which the experimenter took notes, but in such a way that it seems likely that the children themselves had no idea that they were under observation. In all they had about thirty interviews each. They were allowed to talk freely, to draw with coloured chalks, and, at suitable moments during each interview, they were asked (*a*) to tell a story, (*b*) to cover their eyes and say what they saw, (*c*) to look at a series of ink blots and say what they looked like. Everything, of course, depends on the way such tests are carried out, but in Dr. Griffiths' hands they have yielded fascinating results. Looking over the responses to the tests by a single child over a series of interviews it is possible to read quite plainly many of that child's deepest preoccupations. Dr. Griffiths does not offer very much interpretation of her work; she has clearly gone about it in a most scientific and unbiased spirit and it speaks for itself. One of her conclusions is interesting—that such opportunities of free expression (she notes this especially in connection with drawing), quite apart from any intervention on the part of the experimenter, seemed to have a releasing and curative effect on the child. I wonder whether this would have been equally true if there had been no experimenter present at all, or if an experimenter of a less satisfactory personality had been present?

In *Play in Childhood*, Dr. Margaret Lowenfeld gives at considerable length accounts of the play of children ranging between the ages of about 5 to 14 taken from observations of the children attending the Institute of Child Psychology in London. The presentation is less interesting, the book suffers perhaps from having been written as a series of lectures rather than as a single whole. My feeling also was that it was too full of excerpts from other works which, although they give ample evidence of wide acquaintance with the literature of the subject, nevertheless hamper the development of the author's own thesis. Chapters are devoted successively to play considered from a great variety of angles—as Bodily Activity, as Repetition of Experiences and as Demonstration of Phantasy as Realisation of Experience, as Preparation for Life. Group Play, the Comic Element in Play and the case of children who cannot play are also given special chapters.

Speech in Childhood, by George Seth and Douglas Guthrie, is a book of a more old-fashioned type. It is, as the authors write in their preface, the outcome of the co-operation which grew up between two Edinburgh clinics for sick children, one Medical and one Psychological. It is a straightforward and fairly comprehensive work, adequately but not inspiringly written with a good deal of useful common sense in it, but no profound insight into the deeper causes of speech disturbances. It might have been written before the psychology of the Unconscious had become known.

KARIN STEPHEN

SHORTER NOTICES

A History of Rome from 753 B.C. to 410 A.D. By CYRIL E. ROBINSON. *Methuen.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Roman Britain. By C. M. FRANZERO. *Allen and Unwin.* 5*s.*

It is difficult to keep pace with the bibliography of Roman history. During recent years we have been given the scholarly and cautious work of the learned contributors to the Cambridge Ancient History; the exciting and daring work of M. Homo; and there is now in course of publication Messrs. Methuen's History in which the two methods are admirably combined. And this is to say nothing of a score or so of excellent monographs. Now comes Mr. Robinson with his succinct story of the period he covers. Mr. Robinson rarely strays from the straight path of the records, and when in doubt he hedges, as in the case of the Etruscans who in the text are assumed to be indigenous and in one of the many useful maps are conjectured as coming from the East. Nor is Mr. Robinson one who listens not to scandal. He believes, for instance, that Tiberius did live riotously in Capri, though he ascribes his outburst of debauchery and subsequent violence to ill-health. However, we have here a sound and orthodox résumé of Roman History that should be useful to the student and general reader as an untendencious introduction to its subject.

Mr. Franzero's study of Roman Britain is written so vivaciously, and his descriptions of the many Roman remains in this country are so spontaneously graphic, that the book may be recommended to all who are interested in the archaeology of Britain. Mr. Franzero's strength lies in his enthusiastic approval of the Roman Empire: here also lies his weakness. Those who share his belief that our civilisation is based on that of Rome will find his ecstatic asides much to their taste. Others will not find them so agreeable. The book is charmingly illustrated.

Early Negro American Writers. Edited by BENJAMIN BRAWLEY. *Oxford University Press.* 11*s.* 6*d.*

This study of early Negro American writers covers the period from the close of the eighteenth century to the end of the Civil War, and is of value to English readers, not for the literary merit of the excerpts chosen, but for the evidence they provide of the ease and avidity with which the escaped or manumitted or decently treated slave assimilated the European culture by which he was surrounded. If the book does nothing else it nails two lies to the counter; lies which, as the fame of these writers was not hidden, were deliberate. The first lie was that the Negro was incapable of profiting by the education given to the Whites, and the second that the mingling of the blood of the two races merely accentuated the vices of both. Imitative as is the verse here quoted—Pope, Cowper, Scott and Campbell seem to have the greatest influence on the styles—and commonplace as is much of the prose, the veriest dunce can see that here was a people worthy of the best education can give. Phillis Wheatley's heroic couplets, Frederick Douglass's fierce, ironic rhetoric, and George B. Yashou's poem, *Vincent Ogé*, alone should have been the Negro's passport to the culture he was so long denied.

Week-end Competitions

No. 285

Set by Hamish Miles

The Director of the Poetry Society was recently reported as saying that "if Milton came back, he would not get the £5 he received for *Paradise Lost*."

We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a letter not exceeding 250 words, addressed to Mr. Milton, in which a present-day publisher *either* declines the manuscript of *Paradise Lost* and proffers his reasons, *or* makes an offer of £5 for it.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, September 6.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 283

Set by Sylvia Lynd

We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for an account of Lawrence, not exceeding 250 words in length, written about the year 2935. Competitors must assume

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DRURY LANE. Glamorous Night. W. & S.

DUCHESS. Night Must Fall. Wed., Sat.

LYRIC. Tovarich. Wed., Thurs.

QUEEN'S. Wind & the Rain. Wed. & Sat.

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YOUNG working man (25), little education, but possessing what he believes to be an exceptionally clear mind would appreciate suggestions as to the possibilities of (1) contact with similar minds, (2) utilising such clarity of mind for the purpose of digging himself out of his present uncongenial work and surroundings. Box 872, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

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that a few European wars have obliterated most of our records, but that a verbal tradition lingers, based upon *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, etc., etc., etc., the writings of Messrs. and Mesdames Hart, Graves, Murry, Carswell, Hull, E. T., etc., etc., and the films of Rudolph Valentino.

Report by Sylvia Lynd

Most of the competitors have handicapped themselves on the present occasion by trying to be too clever by half, introducing all sorts of additional confusions between the Lawrences and other contemporary characters, or devoting more ingenuity to sketching the condition of society 1,000 years hence than to constructing the Lawrence Myth. I am left with a large number of contributions, however, all of which contain amusing things. Here, for instance, are Mr. Guy Hadley's notes upon the works of a Professor Peabody, entitled "Lorrence: Earth Eater."

(1)

"Peabody traces career from teaching days, accenting subsequent value O.T.C. training. Complexed by educational system, Lorrence began search for New Eden affording feminine permutations. Rebuffed U.K., European squabble *circa* 1914 drove him East where Peabody places true florescence. Adopted Islam, seeking reconcile sexual theories both worlds (controverted by Kipplink, Georgian poet).

Lorrence successfully founded Tigro-Euphratic primitive community after destroying railways, etc., but scheme wrecked by British Govt. obsessed oil and morals. Lorrence compelled alter title *Lady Chatterby's Bother* to *Seven Pillows of Wisdom*. Never forgave betrayal and retired to private life with ardent followers."

(2)

I like particularly, also, Mr. Guy Innes's "dog-headed deity," though it seems to me that five rather than one thousand years would be needed for this enrichment of the Georgian scene.

". . . But for a contemporary account of warfare waged with men and animals on the surface of the earth instead of beneath it or in the stratosphere, the student is referred to *The Seven Lovers of Wisdom*. Fragments of this work, on their original aluminium, are preserved in the Tokio Museum of British Antiquities. The best translation is that of Iwasaki Noguchi. The author was Bernard Shaw (Shah) Lawrence. No other examples of his writings survive except parts of a treatise, apparently in dialogue, on the sex customs of some unknown island. These are believed to have been associated with the use of the gridiron; but whether Lawrence is identical with the saint of that name or the dog-headed deity Bernard is not clear. There is a legend that records of Lawrence were enshrined in the ancient Film Temples or Propaganderies. Here a decadent form of sun-worship, into which entered the play of light and shade, directed by fans, came to an end when the contents of these edifices were destroyed in the Third World War against Nationalism."

(3)

Mr. William Bliss gives us an amusing extract from an Oxford University Press publication of the future, *Arabia Infelix*, suggesting that ecstatic biographers will still be in existence in 2935.

"Poet, though no line of his verse survives; Amorist, though the very names of his lovers are forgotten; Adventurer, though, like the mirage of their own deserts, his adventures vanish upon a nearer approach; Statesman, though the seven pillars of his wisdom are shattered and their bases buried in the sand; weak and yet strong; unbalanced and yet controlling others; self-indulgent and yet ascetic; this sex-obsessed Anthony of the Desert gleams fitfully and inexplicably across the mists of that forgotten century. . . .

Yet was he in fact a 'dual character'? May he not have been a development of himself? May it not be that the earlier Lawrence wearying of 'the expense of spirit in a waste of shame' or, perhaps still yearning to satisfy his obsession of the flesh, sought the greater freedom of the East and the franker recognition of the body permitted to the disciples of the Prophet?"

(4)

W. O. D. begins admirably and allows for the popular influence upon the legend of Rudolph Valentino.

"An examination of the legends persisting among the Whites in the International Reserve points to Sir Lawrence as being the greatest single factor contributing towards this cataclysm.

He was, it appears, a man of extraordinary personal beauty and charm whose first conquests were made while still at school (who knows how to apportion the blame for what followed!). Later he was involved in a scandalous episode with the Duchess of Chatterby, in Rome, and was expelled to Arabia by the Index. Under the arid influence of the desert he was affected more by the sadism than by the possessive romanticism of the Sheiks and he recorded how, before finding his way back to Europe, he poisoned wells, destroyed bridges and stores, and did everything within his power to bring misery to his Arabian hosts."

I divide the first prize between these four competitors and award the second prize to "Catkin," whose contribution I should like to have published in full but whose final joke is fit for private circulation only.

SECOND PRIZE

"Lawrence, the Sheik of Araby, dominated the second and third decades of the twentieth century. After his death—or translation—his kingdom was one of the first victims of the second Roman Empire, but his fame in the old-fashioned art of literature lingered on.

His vast output of secular work was produced under the quaintly chosen pseudonym of Shaw, and it is ironical that these writings are said to have developed from scintillating foolery to pontifical praise of the dictatorship which finally overthrew his desert realm. But in his religious writings he worshipped the dark gods under his own name. His sign, the Phoenix, gathered disciples from almost every continent. Shrines became sacred to the Savage Pilgrims who warred together, the Café Royal, the scene of one of his many betrayals, and the Warren Galleries; while the Collier's Friday Night was long kept holy.

Anecdote and legend have sprung up around the mystic figure of Lawrence and it is impossible to disentangle truth from falsehood. One story which leaves us a human picture tells of the Sheik whimsically warning his earnest disciples against attaching too much significance to the cult of the solar plexus."

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 140.—FROM AN AFRICAN LOG-CABIN

"It was thrilling, the bush-fighting," wrote Lee-Metford. "For several days we were besieged by the rebels—Colonel Backsight, the Doctor, four missionaries and myself. And with Mauser's column, sent to relieve us, only a few miles away! From time to time we chose a new password, and one of the niggers crawled through the bush with it—in cipher! Imagine us, seated round a table in our log-cabin (seven strangely assorted figures) putting the current selection into code! On the last occasion, I remember, the password was coded as "5017984." A lot of use that would have been to the rebels if they'd captured the paper containing it! As it happens, they didn't—and the next day Mauser crossed the Limpopo. . . ."

What was the coded password?

SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM 136.—THE PAPER CHASE

(1) *Evans lives at "Beechmead."*
(2) *"Camera Chat" should have gone to "Fircroft."*
(3) *Dixon reads the "Motoring Mercury."*

A full solution of this well-contrived problem would occupy about a column.

There is, however, no need for me to set it out in detail, as there must be an almost record number of correct solutions, and, I think, no incorrect ones.

PROBLEM 137.—GIUCO PIANO

"Unless I have misconceived this problem, it seems to me a very stupid one."

So writes one solver, and one or two others, who have also the good fortune to be consistently clear-headed, comment in a similar strain. But in point of fact the problem has baffled many solvers. This is shown by an analysis of the seventy-five solutions received:

7½	points	.. ..	9 solvers
8	,,	.. ..	4 ,,
8½	,,	.. ..	2 ,,
9	,,	.. ..	38 ,,
9½	,,	.. ..	20 ,,
13 (!)	,,	.. ..	2 ,,

9 *points* is correct, since, if a player scores 9, there cannot be four others with higher scores, whereas, if he scores 8½, four higher scores (9½—9—9—9) are possible.

The problem was suggested to me by Maurice Ellinger, the well-known card and chess expert, and he was right in thinking it would prove a teaser.

AWARDS

PROBLEM 135

Low's Cartoons: T. Cope, 47 Greencroft Gardens, N.W.6.
Nine points are awarded.

PROBLEM 136

Low's Cartoons: V. E. Ireland, National Dental Hospital, Gt. Portland Street, W.1.
Six points are awarded.

PROBLEM 137

Low's Cartoons: D. H. Hersom, 9 Twyford Road, Ilford, Essex.
Eight points are awarded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

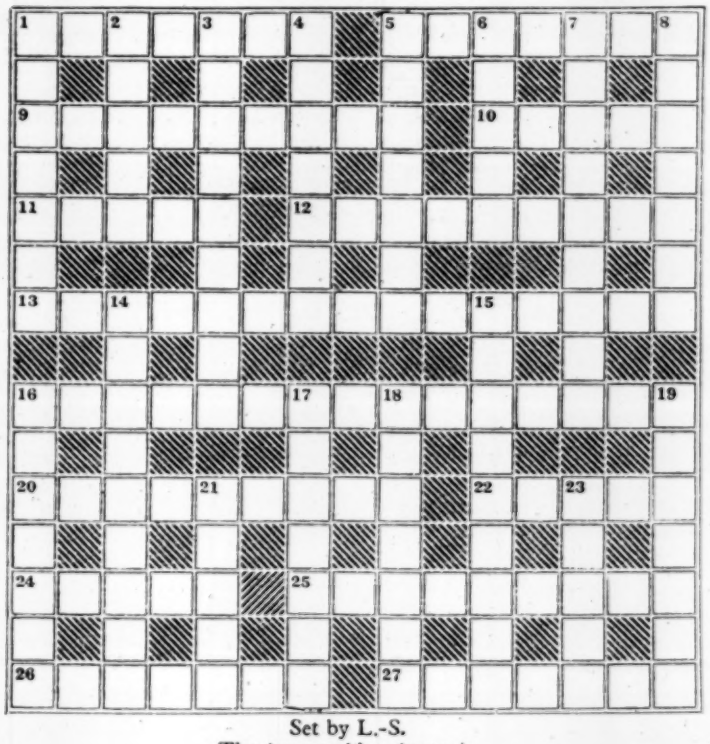
In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize, consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s*. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope; but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 286

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday. Prize-winners should address their claims to the Editor.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Walter Jones, Ynypllynlladd, Cadoxton, Neath, Glam.

ACROSS

1. In form, perhaps.
5. How the shepherd lets out the sheep?
9. Newspapers in a rush.
10. An ounce that invigorates.
11. Even the Anti-Noise League would find this noise approved.
12. I arrest it, as it annoys.
13. Sea habits.
16. Non-meat-eaters' substitute for the bone content?
20. He produces a capital show every year.
22. The Irish Avon.
24. Apparent in some victorious armies.
25. A collector of shreds and patches.
26. No doubt one sees a peepshow through it.
27. Canine metal.

DOWN

1. Obviously the hack isn't out at grass.
2. Regularly stops the doctor's visit.
3. What vegetarians do instead of pig-sticking?
4. "Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The —— rocks thy sea-sick weary bark."
5. How tube trains put up with overhead traffic.
6. A wintry failure.
7. The beastly object of his training is to make his first his second.
8. St. Thomas was famed for it.
14. A plus man with a girl in the garden.
15. Straw handicraft.
16. They put a price on everything.
17. Grows like wicked prosperity.
18. He lost his head in a ruined garden.
19. Bet his earnings with a Bolshy.
21. A foreign word to put on a shield.
23. It's over 1ft.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

MOTORING

AUSTIN Ten Lichfield Sun-saloon. Blue. 1935 Shop soiled, £155. 1936 price £175. Unlicensed. Only journey, Birmingham to Claygate. Cæsar's wife refuses to compete. Claygate Motors, Hare Lane, Claygate, Surrey. Esher 395.

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The Economic Journal

The Quarterly Journal of the Royal Economic Society

SEPTEMBER, 1935.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

BY TOREADOR

THE CITY AND THE CRISIS—GOLD SHARES—UTILITIES BILL—ITALIAN BORROWINGS

IT is futile to canvass political opinions in the City of London. The disinterested view does not exist. They do not talk about the peace of the world: they talk of the peace of the stock markets. Since everyone has a direct or indirect interest in the Stock Exchange, every international move which threatens the market value of securities is anathema. For Great Britain to stand by the League Covenant is considered mad: to stand up to Italy is considered madder. Because it is believed that France does not want collective action against Italy under Article 16, this is regarded in the City as a heaven-sent opportunity for Great Britain to sneak out of the League of Nations, retire into splendid isolation, and build up such a vast armament of battleships and aeroplanes that British investors will never fear, and iron and steel, shipbuilding, aircraft and armament shares will boom for ever. If you want to meet living embodiments of Rothermere and Beaverbrook, take a drink in any bar in the environs of Throgmorton Street. The belief being widespread that Great Britain and France will never force Mussolini's hand, that the Abyssinian trouble will be happily confined to the Abyssinians, and that the risks of a Mediterranean war are nil, there has been no panicky rush to sell securities. Nevertheless, while the tension lasts, and until the Council of the League of Nations has made a decision, no one is in a hurry to buy, so that the prices of most securities drift downwards daily.

* * *

There have been some particularly weak spots. Electricity supply shares, a sale of which I recommended last week on general grounds, have been even weaker than the gilt-edged market. Gold shares have been sold heavily from Johannesburg and Paris. In Johannesburg there appears to be a perpetually over-bought position. Rich and poor have over-speculated, and when the rich become nervous the poor are forced to sell. The white men in Johannesburg, surrounded by blacks and dependent for their investment well-being upon the quiet labour of Kaffir boys in the mines, will no doubt regard the massacre of Abyssinians with some trepidation. The market situation has not been improved by the disclosures of a mining promotion scandal.

The following table sets out the present market prices, as compared with the highest prices recorded this year, of some of the leading gold shares, together with the estimated "lives" and the gross yields on the basis of double the last half-yearly dividends:

	High 1935.	Present Price.	June, 1935, Dividends.	Gross Yield *...	Estimated Life.
Consolidated Main Reef	4 1/16	3 7/16	2/3	£7 4 9	40 years
Crown Mines ..	14 11/16	12 3/4	8/–	7 0 9	40 „
Geduld	11 3/32	9½	6/9	7 18 9	20 „
Randfontein ..	60/–	49/6	2/–	8 18 9	40 „
Brakpan	2½	1 15/16	1/1½	6 9 9	40 „
Robinson Deep "B"	55/7½	42/6	1/3	6 10 9	30 „
Sub Nigel	14½	12	8/–	7 9 6	40 „
New State Areas ..	79/4½	76/6	2/6	7 4 6	20 „

* Equivalent gross, after allowing for Dominion income tax relief.

Whether these shares can now be regarded as cheap depends to some extent upon the taxation proposals of the Union Government next April. If the present excess profits duty and surtax are abandoned for a flat "over-all" rate (say 40 per cent.), some companies which are avoiding excess profits duty by mining low-grade ore may be badly affected—unless and until they mine higher-grade ore (e.g. Randfontein). The percentages of total profits taken last year by the Government in taxation were as follows: Consolidated Main Reef 44 per cent, Crown 43 per cent., Randfontein 16 per cent., Robinson Deep 39 per cent., and Sub Nigel 31 per cent. (For the leased mines, in taxation and Government share, Brakpan 47 per cent. and New State Areas 74 per cent.). Taxation apart, these gold shares should soon attract buyers, for there is no vital change in the outlook for gold (sterling price).

* * *

The compromise on the Utilities Bill, which President Roosevelt signed this week, resulted in a permissive "death sentence" clause. The Bill instructs the Securities Exchange Commission to dissolve all utility holding companies as soon as it is practicable after January 1st, 1938, except those (*a*) which are operating single integrated systems and (*b*) which can show economies not otherwise obtainable. The companies exempt under (*a*) will be American Gas & Electric, Consolidated Gas of New York, Consolidated Gas of Baltimore, Public Service of New Jersey, Niagara Hudson, Pacific Gas & Electric, Pacific Lighting, Detroit Edison and Southern California Edison, and probably North American and United Gas Improvement will escape under (*b*). Nevertheless, the attacks on the rate structures will remain, the Public Service of New Jersey and Consolidated Gas of New York being particularly vulnerable. Among the holding companies badly affected by the Bill are—in order of badness—Utilities Power and Light, Associated Gas & Electric and Electric Bond & Share. The popular press in America welcomes the Bill as an end to racketeering finance. The utility magnates, they say, who have drawn fat salaries and bonuses for many years, will no longer be able to extract millions of dollars out of their operating companies at the expense of consumers and investors. The personal abuses, let us hope, will go, but the Securities Exchange Commission, which is now quite friendly to Wall Street, is not likely to take very drastic action. Meanwhile, there will be many opportunities for market jobbing. One day the Securities Commission will suggest that a certain holding company is killed—another day that it is being saved. However, nothing definite can happen until January 1938, and long before then the threatened companies will have appealed to the Supreme Court to declare the Bill unconstitutional.

* * *

The London clearing banks have decided not to renew credit facilities to Italian banks. The immediate effect of the decision is to worsen unemployment in South Wales. The exports of coal to Italy have practically ceased and Italian orders have been diverted to Germany and Poland. The ostensible reason is that Italy is so short of foreign exchange that she has to barter. Unless Great Britain can increase her purchases of Italian goods there will be no exchange available for the purchase of British coal. Germany and Poland, on the other hand, are taking increased quantities of Italian goods. There is no political motive behind the decision of the London clearing banks—but unless and until the British Government has been ordered by the Council of the League of Nations to take economic sanctions against Italy it seems absurd for British banks to take action on their own.

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Company Meeting

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PICTURE CORPORATION

The 8th ordinary general meeting of the Associated British Picture Corporation, Ltd., was held in London on Wednesday.

Mr. John Maxwell (Chairman and Managing Director) said (in part) that the total available balance of profit was £560,238, and it was proposed to pay a final dividend of 6 per cent., less tax, on the ordinary shares, making 10 per cent. actual, less tax, for the year.

The Cinema Department had had a good year's trading and showed a substantial increase of profit. They had had the benefit of the re-adjustment of Entertainments Tax, by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had remedied an undoubted grievance. They had acquired a number of additional properties, and the benefit of their earnings would be felt during the current year, so that altogether he looked forward to a substantial improvement in profits.

Regarding the Film Distribution Department the profits showed a slight increase; indeed, that department had remained remarkably steady in earning capacity during the eight years of the company's existence. The film production department's prospect was not quite so pleasing. During the last 12 to 18 months conditions in film production had become increasingly difficult. Costs had been mounting steadily, individual films had become more expensive, and gross receipts had not been increasing proportionately.

There had been a great and unusual flow of money into film production, and it had not always been wisely and properly spent. Large sums of money had been spent extravagantly, with the result that costs were being forced up all around. In the last year or so he knew of large sums of money advanced on pictures having been lost, and he would deplore a return to the conditions that had existed in 1928-29, when almost £2,000,000 had been lost in the liquidation and reconstruction of film-production companies.

He was jealous of the reputation for commercial integrity of the industry in which this company had played a prominent part in the last eight years. They were not dependent to any extent on their film production department and, although conditions in that department continued difficult, they would be able to maintain and, he believed, increase the profits of the Corporation as a whole. They had so aligned their policy and programme that, even if untoward events should come to pass, they would not be prejudicially affected and, when the present feverish activity had burned itself out, they would, with their large material resources, be able to take full advantage of the undoubted prosperity which the business of film production could have under normal trading conditions.

The report was unanimously adopted.

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